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June 11-24, 2015

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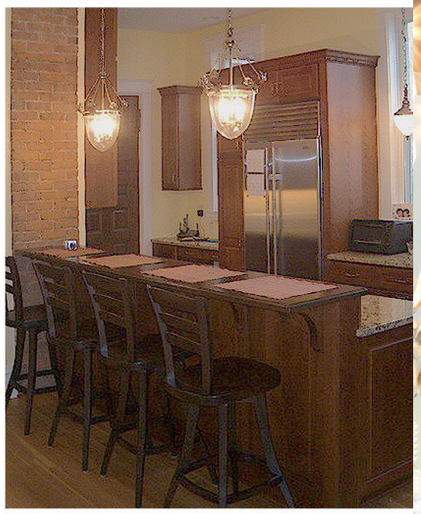
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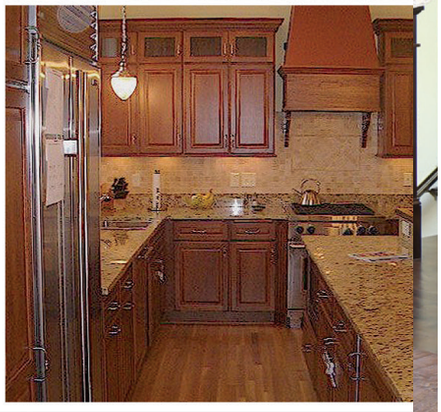
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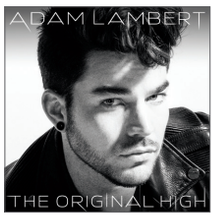
Photo by Brett Dorrian

ON THE COVER
Gussy up and get on out there for Pride like The Ladies of the Lakes pictured here at Betty Danger's Country Club. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

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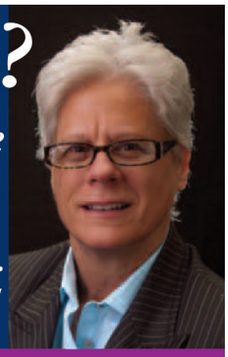


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FROM THE EDITOR → ANDY LIEN

Pride in Authenticity

Happy Pride! It's the time of year when we come out in technicolor and celebrate what makes this community so special and unique: the people, the activities, the causes, the relationships, the history, the hearts. As is obvious on our cover with some of The Ladies of the Lakes, we're showing off colors and characters, too. In fact, the lovely dame in blue, Girtha Rotunda, referred to the Sisters in the article on page 170 as "giant acid trip clown nuns" who raise money and entertain people, which made me laugh heartily. As the Twin Cities' local chapter of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, The Ladies of the Lakes are seen at events that range from family-friendly to adult-only, raising money for different needs and causes in the community. What's not to celebrate about that?

Okay, I need to come clean here. I owe clowns a cosmic apology. My lack of fandom is so well-known that people taunt me with clowns on a near-daily basis. It's not personal (well, the taunting might be); it's that I don't sit well with not being able to see behind the makeup and costumes. I want to deal with people, not personas.

Except aren't clowns the most obvious in their disguises amongst all the people who are disguising themselves? Aren't they the most open in their illusions? Credible, even? "What you see is what you get" is rarely the case in this world as we all have multiple facets to our personalities, so why target a segment of performers for trying to make the world better by putting forth a facet that is happy and joyous and might leave a smear of makeup somewhere when we hug?

During our photo shoot at Betty Danger's Country Club, the Sisters and their Guard were gracious and kind personalities, spreading goodwill. People smiled when they saw them and asked to take pictures with the colorful characters. Girtha Rotunda and I got to chat and laugh with some lovely ladies who read *Lavender* and were celebrating a birthday that day. With exquisitely painted faces and in various textures and designs of headwear, corsets, dresses, and heels, the crew golfed, posed, and rode the Danger. At a quiet moment, Hilda Clymb very earnestly looked me in the eyes and discussed with me how the community can't become complacent in our work against discrimination and HIV/AIDS. It's clearly not all fun and games for this crew. And, though I may not know the legal names of the people I'm talking to, the names they present as The Ladies of the Lakes are valid and honor the people they become when they don the makeup and garb of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. That afternoon became one of the more memorable ones in recent history for me, considering that my already-open mind just got split apart by some nuns. Is this clowning actually duplicity? No. I simply need to look at authenticity through a different lens.

Mea culpa, clowns.

If there's one thing I've learned in my four years in this job it's that authenticity takes many forms. No matter what facet of our personality we choose to present at any given time, it is still a part of us, something of what makes up our authentic selves. Some of us have quite a ways to go until we feel comfortable in our own skin, maybe to come out of the closet or realize that our gender identity may be more fluid than we knew. Or, we want to change something in our lives that isn't working for us or volunteer to help others or speak more openly about things that bother us. It's all a journey and we can't discount wherever we are on it. Please, look to the many examples in the pages of this Pride Issue and see how others have progressed toward authenticity, through support groups, spirituality, art, sports, music, makeup, activism, recovery, volunteering, and loving. As different as each person is, so is each person's path.

With you, with authenticity, and with Pride,

Andy

(aka Sister Mea Culpa?)

OUR LAVENDER → BY JOHN TOWSEND

20 Years of Giving

Lavender Media has held its own as a successful business for 20 years since the first magazine issue came out on June 9, 1995. Before that, numerous GLBT publications, both privately capitalized and nonprofit, had come and gone but were unable to sustain themselves long-term because of lack of funding.

It's easy to look at *Lavender*'s classy appearance and its widespread popularity in these days after the marriage equality victory and think that it was all roses. However, when *Lavender* came into being there was much more discrimination. The hysteria surrounding AIDS was not what it had been the decade before but its stigma still lingered as a scarlet letter for gay men, even if they weren't infected. There was an anti-obscenity campaign projected onto gay-created publicly funded art by right-wing politicians. This was also a sign of an increased intensity by fundamentalist religious organizations including media outlets, national and statewide. Many businesses would simply not advertise in a GLBT-identified magazine.

This meant that *Lavender* actually undervalued its product and therefore cut advertising prices dramatically. This was despite the fact that owner Stephen Rocheford had financial demands to meet such as rent, insurance, employees, writers, and taxes. In the face of all this, *Lavender* kept afloat, and remains sustainable unlike the previous defunct community publications.

The impression this success may give to some is that *Lavender* must have had to have been restrained in what it could give back to the community. But a recent computer analysis of the amount of donations actually contributed comes to a remarkable 20-year total of $5,157,656.48 with an average donation amount per year of $257,882.82.

Lavender has given $3,472,264.52 in advertising discounts since its inception. For its Community Connection pages, which lists a broad range of GLBT businesses, agencies, and organizations, *Lavender* has given $648,375.61. *Lavender*'s outreach to the community is also seen in the $514,156.58 it has given to OutFront Minnesota in editorial space and $500,188.04 to other organizations in nonprofit advertising discounts over the years. The same spirit is felt in the $22,671.83 given to miscellaneous concerns including sports teams, local business organizations, and nonprofits. With 20 more years of *Lavender*, here's to 20 more years of giving.



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A WORD IN EDGEWISE → BY E.B. BOATNER

From Conflict to Celebration: Kinky Boots plays the Orpheum

June 28, 1969: Drag queens fight back at Stonewall. July 28, 2015: Drag queens perform at the Orpheum. Pride is a time to celebrate the entire queer community; J. Harrison Ghee, member of the coming (July 28–August 2) *Kinky Boots* cast, speaks eloquently of the show's message and drag's growing, public acceptance.

"I was born and raised in Fayetteville, North Carolina, the son of a Missionary Baptist pastor. My life is very close to [protagonist] Lola's in her struggle for her father's acceptance. My parents have always raised me to love everyone and accept people for who they are, so it was a journey for us as a family when they learned of my involvement in the drag community for the past five years outside of the show."

***Kinky Boots'* message is: "Changing your mind will change your world."**

J. Harrison Ghee: It definitely embodies that theme and has manifested it in my life in relation to my family and my part in this show. We traveled to Durham in March and my family was able to see me play Lola. My mother raved to my cast members that she couldn't see me do anything else…. I explained to them that this was coming from the lady who told me when I was auditioning she hoped I didn't get the job, and, if I did, she wasn't coming to see it. Moreover, my Christian father texted me afterward to tell me he was proud of who and what I am. This show has opened so many minds in my world and continues to do the same for many across the country.

You've performed drag for some years.

JHG: Drag has evolved so much and has been a medium for so many messages; I am honored to be a part of every aspect of it. My drag career outside this show has afforded me many opportunities to make a difference in my community. Now, I have an even larger platform to be an example for change in the world. People find themselves drawn to the camp and the glamour of drag and don't even realize they are being affected on a grander level by a man who is simply fighting for a cause.

Being a part of this show is nothing shy of an honor and a blessing. From the creative team that is so loving and supportive, to the cast members who are ridiculously talented and invested in this message that we spread, to the amazing audiences we get to experience in these awesome cities, *Kinky Boots* is something special to be a part of and I don't take this opportunity for granted.

Lavender readers should be prepared for a big fab fun time when they come to the show and be ready to sing along, clap, dance in the aisles, and leave full of joy and love, as long as they come in with an open heart and mind.

Even small matters have BIG consequences. Don't be a consequence!



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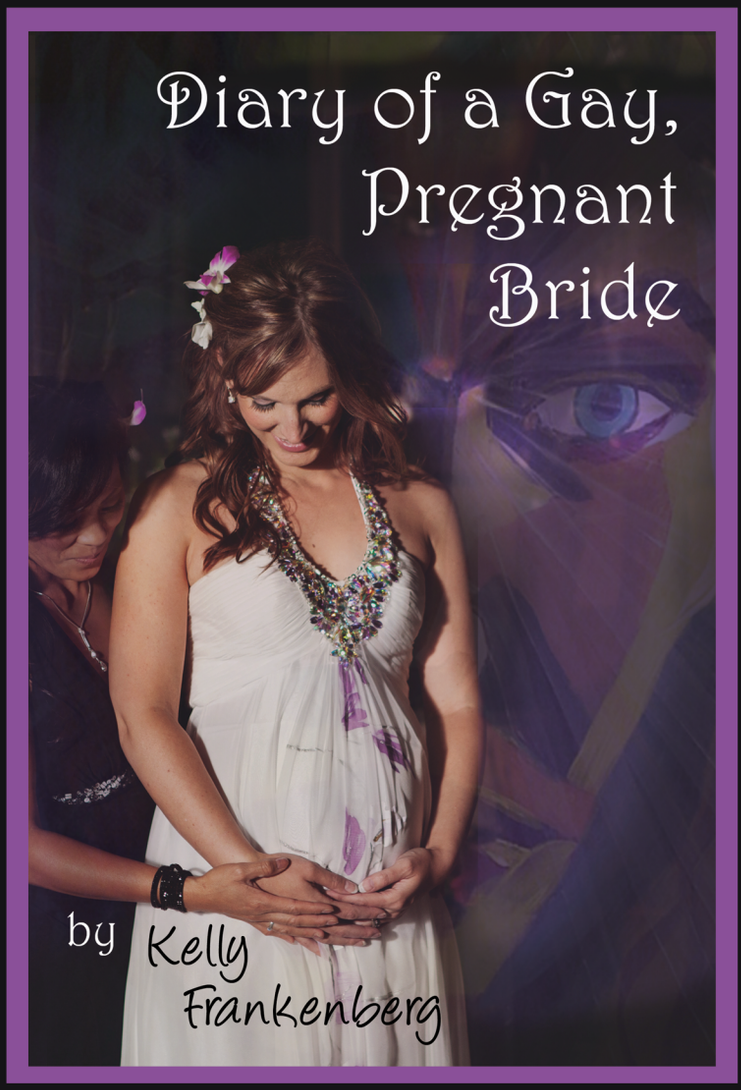
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MAY 14, 2015





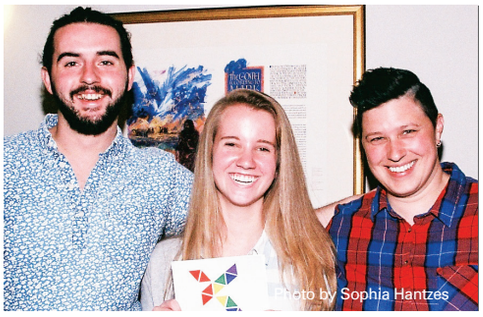












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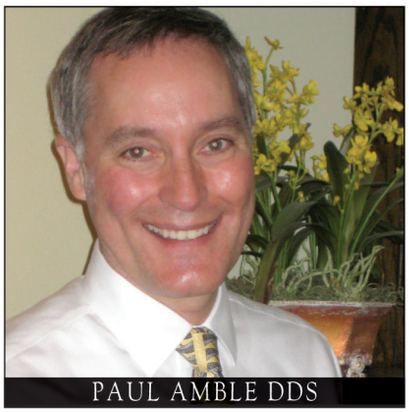








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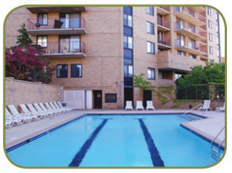
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PRIDE

BY LINDSI GISH

THE 2015 TWIN CITIES PRIDE AWARDEES

Recognized for their Exceptional, Transformational Contributions to Our Community

Each year, Twin Cities Pride recognizes organizations and individuals who've had compelling, lasting, and transformational impact on the GLBTQ community locally. On May 21 at Intermedia Arts, the Grand Marshal Reception and Art Exhibition took place, honoring this year's awardees. Learn more about these inspiring people below:

ANDREA JENKINS

Grand Marshal

Nominated by: Monica Meyer

As Andrea said in her #TogetherWeCan story (found at tcpride.tumblr.com): "As a trans-identified artist, one of the most important aspects is to be authentic. I wanted that for my life, to be authentic with myself, with family and with those who loved me. Did I lose friends when I became my authentic self? No. I found my true friends when I began this transition. Transitions have beginnings but they never really end. It is a challenge I and others face bravely every day."

By all accounts, Andrea Jenkins truly needs no introduction in this community. She's a leader, a poet, a writer, a performance artist, a current and former member of the board of directors for several local organizations including OutFront Minnesota and SMARTS. Andrea is a former Senior Policy Aide, where she served for twelve years. She's a mother of daughter Nia, a grandmother of granddaughter Aniyah, and a co-curator of Intermedia Arts' Queer Voices Reading Series. Andrea has been a Naked Stages Fellow, through which she produced a one-woman show loosely based on her manuscript *Black Pearl*. She's a grant recipient for her spoken word poetry. Today, she leads the trans-history project at the Jean-Nickolaus Tretter Collection Archives at the University of Minnesota where she's collecting, archiving, and sharing hundreds of hours of conversations with transgender people from Minneapolis, Chicago, and the rural reaches of the Midwest, creating a lasting record of their journeys.



Pride Award Winners Julie Dafydd and Andrea Jenkins. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

JULIE DAFYDD

Lifetime Champion of Pride Award

Nominated by: John Bigger

Julie Dafydd is recognized across our community for myriad reasons — in fact, she was a writer for this very publication — "Consider the Source" ran for years. Julie has long been dedicated to fundraising and awareness-building via The Imperial Court of Minnesota. And she's a lady of the stage, including her one-woman play, *Soderville,* in which she plays herself both today and in her past. In *Soderville* (named for the Minnesota town in which she spent most of her youth) Julie brings us into her personal history, including her struggle as a youth and her eventual transition. Recently, Julie joined TheColu.mn as a contributing writer for a recurring post called *Transformation*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30



love notes

Dear LGBTQ Community,

Let's go out for something other than a smoke break.

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and Shift MN

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This program is funded by a Tobacco-Free Communities Grant from the Minnesota Department of Health



Monica Meyer accepts the Community Champion of Pride Award from Scott Feldman on behalf of OutFront Minnesota. Photo by Sophia Hantzes



Kate Schaefers, AARP MN Executive Council Member, accepts the Corporate Champion of Pride Award from Scott Feldman on behalf of AARP. Photo by Sophia Hantzes

OUTFRONT MINNESOTA

Community Champion of Pride

Nominated by: Anne Hodson

OutFront Minnesota works to lead Minnesota toward GLBTQ equality through community organizing, public policy, anti-violence, legal, and education/training. OutFront co-founded Minnesotans United for All Families with Project515 (one of the largest grassroots movements Minnesota has ever seen) working with coalition partners and community members to defeat the proposed constitutional amendments that would've limited the freedom to marry.

Last year, OutFront advocated with the Safe Schools for All Coalition to pass the Safe & Supportive Minnesota School Act — antibullying legislation that helps protect GLBTQ youth.

They also worked with the Minneapolis Trans Workgroup to raise awareness and support for the City Council's vote around designations of single-user restrooms by sex, making things easier and safer for trans people.

AARP MINNESOTA

Corporate Champion of Pride

Nominated by: Harry Hartigan

Mistreatment and disregard of GLBTQ seniors is not unique to long-term care facilities; often GLBTQ seniors are disproportionately affected by issues of stigma, isolation, and unequal treatment. While enduring the normal, human process of aging, their identity can make their lives even more difficult.

In response to this important community and to offer more support, AARP Minnesota teamed up with Prime Timers MSP and Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly on Boomer Town, a 50-plus area in Loring Park during Pride weekend where seniors/elders of the GLBTQ community who have given so much of themselves can relax, enjoy one another's company, and find resources intended especially for them.

It's important that we all remember how much this senior community has contributed to get us to this historical time in our community. Thanks to our older GLBTQ community for their courage, and thanks to AARP Minnesota for this important work to honor them.



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BY AMY ONGARO



Eric Zimmerman. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

#TOGETHERWECAN VOLUNTEER

Honoring Two Brilliant and Benevolent Twin Cities Pride Volunteers

ERIC ZIMMERMAN

How did you start volunteering with Pride?

Eric Zimmerman: I've been involved with Pride since 1999. Bill Nienaber, a good friend, coworker, and also the PR director of Pride at the time, was the one who got me involved. I was newly out at the time so it was a great way to get to know the community and contribute to a good cause. I started attending the meetings with staff and board members and in 2001 I signed on as full-time volunteer helping with IT, computer, and other tech support for Pride. Being involved with Pride continues to be meaningful to me because it's a way for me to help my community within my expertise and what I enjoy doing.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36

A TIP FROM A
FORMER
SMOKER

Be prepared. Your lung cancer can spread to your brain.

Rose, age 59, Texas

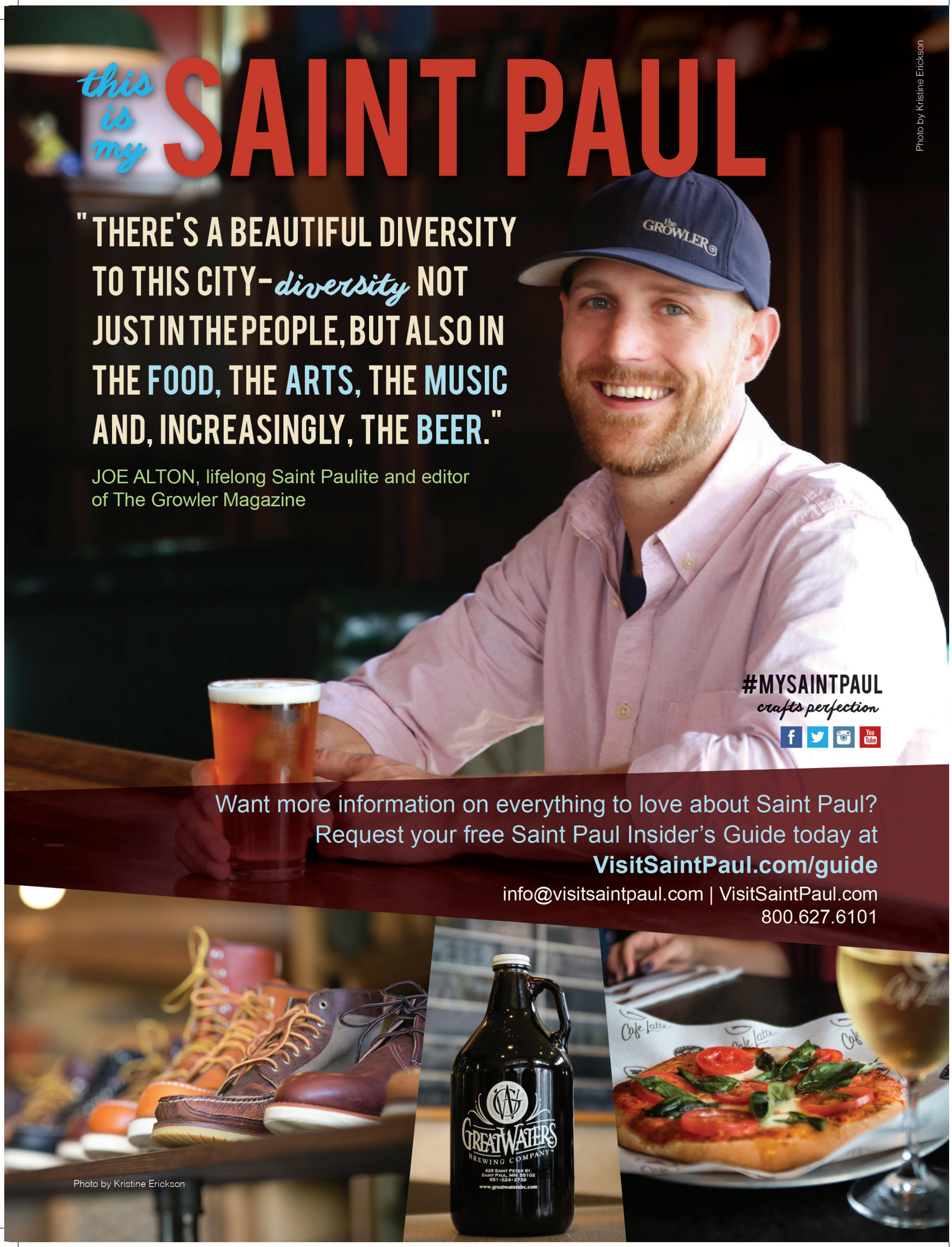


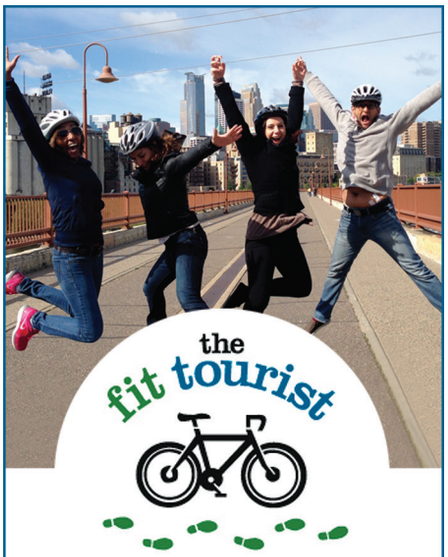
Smoking caused Rose's lung cancer. She had to move from the small town she loved to get the treatment she needed, including chemo, radiation and having part of her lung removed. Recently, her cancer spread to her brain. You can quit.

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Karen Broman. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

What's your current role with Pride?
EZ: I am the festival IT manager. During the festival, our team is manning the operations area and ensuring everything is running smoothly.

What are your most memorable moments of Pride from over the years?
EZ: There used to be mass commitment ceremonies at the main stage before the concerts started — my favorite part of the festival. I'd ask someone on the IT team to cover for me so I'd be able to watch. Another memory from the earlier years was when I was up in the trees running a line through for the Internet from the main park building on 15th street in preparation for the festival!

What other activities or hobbies are you involved with?
EZ: I consider myself an environmentalist, as an active voter and volunteer in local environmental causes and initiatives. I love bicycling, hiking, camping, and just hanging out outside. I've also gotten into nature photography recently.

What would you tell someone else who was thinking about volunteering with Pride?
EZ: Some people are intimidated when it comes to volunteering because it's outside of their comfort level and they aren't sure what they can contribute. Every person has something to contribute. While I started with my technology expertise, I've contributed my voice to many other areas. To get started, think about what skill sets you have now and know you'll be offering that plus more to a community that would greatly benefit from your help!

An inspirational quote that guides you?
EZ: This quote has been poignant for many situations in my life. It will all work out in the end. "It will all find its way in time." – Tori Amos

KAREN BROMAN

How did you start volunteering for Pride?
Karen Broman: At the time, I was in a relationship with a woman and not completely comfortable sharing that fact with people. I thought volunteering with Twin Cities Pride might afford me a nonjudgmental setting where I could talk about my relationship openly. I was correct about that, but in hindsight, I needn't have worried about being honest with my friends and family, either; they have been wonderfully supportive. This is my 10th season volunteering with Twin Cities Pride.

What's your current role with the Pride staff?
KB: I am currently involved as a consultant for the Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade, after serving as the parade coordinator for seven years. Although I have scaled back my official year-round duties the past two seasons, I cannot resist the frenzy and anticipation on the morning of a parade, so you can always find me involved during Pride weekend as well.

What's your personal Pride story?
KB: In 2006, I volunteered for the Pride Block Party held at Bryant-Lake Bowl, as a safety and security volunteer, and in a somewhat nebulous role at the parade. During the parade, I found myself serving as a sort of personal assistant to Dan Mendez, then-parade director. After the event, he asked if I'd like to be involved in a more formal way, and I was so flattered, blissfully unaware of just how much work I was signing up for, that I happily accepted. Over the following years, my work with Twin Cities Pride has given me the space to continue learning about myself while surrounded by a diverse group of accepting individuals. Through my involvement, I've gained a tremendous number of capable mentors and dear friends I may have otherwise never met.

What does volunteerism mean to you personally?
KB: My job as a forensic scientist is important work, but also fraught with stress, serious situations, and potentially life-altering consequences. Volunteering gives me the opportunity to use my natural talents and abilities in a (usually) less-harried environment. It is also a great way to network and become informed about parts of our community that I don't interface with on a regular basis. Whenever I've thought I might be interested in something or needed to learn more, volunteering for a related event or organization has always let me peek behind the curtain, so to speak, and find out what that thing is really about. Plus, giving back is just good karma, in my opinion.

What would you tell someone else who was thinking about volunteering with Pride?
KB: First and foremost, we're a pretty wacky group of people, so prepare to laugh often. Second, everyone involved with Twin Cities Pride is on a personal journey that probably intersects with yours in some fashion, so no need to worry about judgment here. We encourage all involved to be their authentic selves; our diversity makes us better. Third, having volunteer work — especially, but not limited to, year-round positions — on a resume is always a bonus in life. Last, but not least, the weather in late June can be kind of crazy.

An inspirational quote that guides you?
KB: "I arise in the morning torn between the desire to improve the world and the desire to enjoy the world. This makes it hard to plan the day." – E.B. White



Together we'll go far



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Peaches. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

READY TO ROCK (OR DANCE, OR JAM)?

Your Guide to Local Music at Pride

Two days. Three stages. Dozens of performers. The soundtrack to Pride weekend is eclectic and diverse and awesome. You know, just like Pride itself. All shows are free and will have an ASL interpreter. We've collected the best of everything from comedy to cabaret and everything in between. So plan your weekend accordingly, and come prepared to dance (or laugh, or sing along…depending on the show).

SATURDAY, JUNE 27:

It's the first day of Pride weekend, so you'll want to pace yourself. Start the day nice and easy with All God's Children Praise Team, and treat yourself with a VIP ticket to see Deborah Cox, Peaches, Mayda, and Hunter Valentine topped off with a fireworks show. Tickets available at www.tcpride.org.

Loring Stage

12:00 p.m.: All God's Children Praise Team
1:00 p.m.: Haley E & The Rydells
2:00 p.m.: Junebug
3:00 p.m.: Tender Tomboys
4:00 p.m.: g'Beau

Stonewall Stage

Emceed by Nina DiAngelo

12:00 p.m.: Mad Shaw Menagerie
1:00 p.m.: Comedian Matt Iverson
1:15 p.m.: Singer Chris Chord
1:30 p.m.: Jeremy Neiderer (ASL)
1:45 p.m.: B.J. Armani's Cabaret
2:30 p.m.: Madams of Matties
3:00 p.m.: Dragged Out

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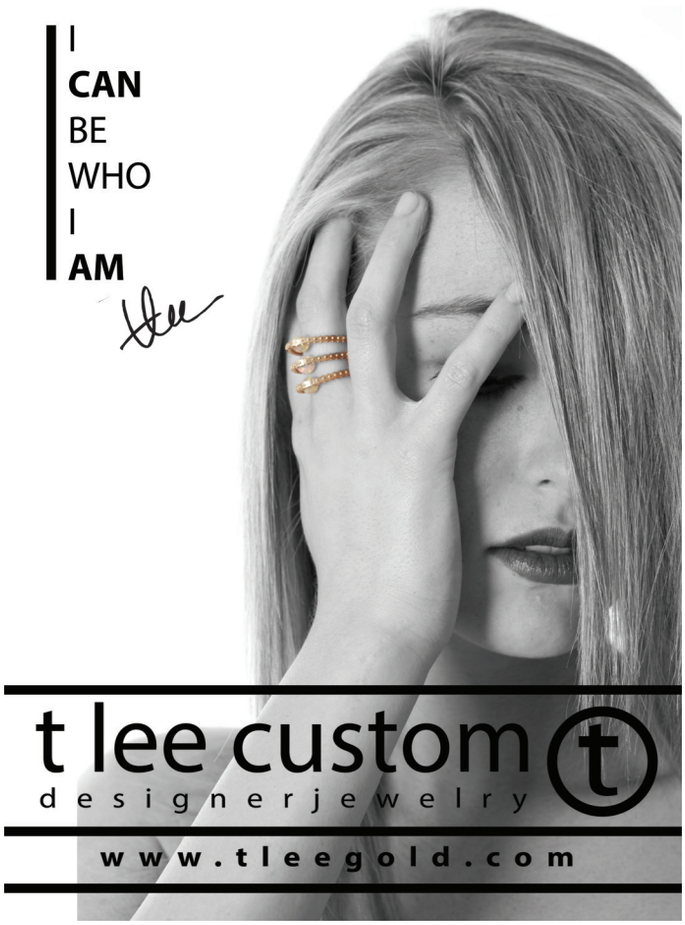
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Mayda. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

4:00 p.m.: Fusion Cabaret
5:00 p.m.: Pumps & Pearls

P2P Stage
Emceed by Michelle B and Sol Ras
11:30 a.m.: Southside Desire
12:00 p.m.: The Big Epic Show
12:30 p.m.: Botzy
1:00 p.m.: Lioness
1:30 p.m.: Lil One
2:00 p.m.: Maria Isa
3:15 p.m.: Kevin Kaoz Moore
4:00 p.m.: Sotaboyzzz
5:00 p.m.: Chardenai Vang
5:30 p.m.: Armani

SATURDAY NIGHT:
Pride in Concert
Located in Loring Park

We can almost guarantee it's the only time in your life when you'll see Peaches and Deborah Cox in the same night, so pick up your tickets as soon as you can. General admission tickets are just $10 in advance. If you're feeling fancy (and we hope you are) VIP tickets are $75, and include complimentary snacks and beverages. Get your tickets in advance at www.tcpride.org.
5:00 p.m.: Gates open
5:30 p.m.: DJ set
5:50 p.m.: Mayda
6:50 p.m.: Hunter Valentine
8:10 p.m.: Peaches
9:10 p.m.: Deborah Cox
10:00 p.m.: Fireworks!

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

We're wrapping up Pride weekend by taking you to church. Yeah, you heard right. But don't worry about wearing your Sunday best. All God's Children Metropolitan Community Church will host a nondenominational service at 9 a.m. on the Loring stage. For the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42



Deborah Cox. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

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Hunter Valentine. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

rest of the day, the Pride stages feature everything from blues to chorus to drag shows. We call that #blessed.

Loring Stage
8:50 a.m.: CHURCH!
12:30 p.m.: Freedom Jazz!
1:25 p.m.: Jack and the Coax
2:20 p.m.: Pocket Watch
3:15 p.m.: Jamecia Bennett + Band
4:15 p.m.: Roxxy Hall Band
5:15 p.m.: TBD

Stonewall Stage
Emceed by Nina DiAngelo
12:30 p.m.: TBD
1:00 p.m.: Ladies of LaFemme
2:00 p.m.: TBD
2:30 p.m.: Amazing DRAGons
3:00 p.m.: Peaches
3:15 p.m.: Dom Glovon
3:30 p.m.: Tina G.
3:45 p.m.: TBD
4:00 p.m.: Imperial Court of Minnesota
5:00 p.m.: TBD

Wedding Pavilion
1:45 p.m.: Calliope
Women's Chorus
3:00 p.m.: TBD

P2P Stage
Emceed by Michelle B and Sol Ras
12:30 p.m.: TBD
12:45 p.m.: Quentin Sounds
1:00 p.m.: Why Khaliq
1:15 p.m.: North Star Blues Project
1:45 p.m.: HRBK
2:15 p.m.: Bdot Crock
2:45 p.m.: TBD
3:45 p.m.: Sweetz P.
4:30 p.m.: Hollywood Prodigy
4:45 p.m.: Prior Ave
5:15 p.m.: The Blue Cities
5:30 p.m.: King Fuvi

PRIDE STAGE GUIDE
Loring Stage:
Located in, you guessed it, Loring Park, smack dab in the center. Conveniently located next to the beer garden.

Stonewall Stage
Located in the southwest corner of Loring Park, near Hennepin and Lyndale.

P2P Stage
Located in the southeast corner of Loring Park, near the Community Center building.

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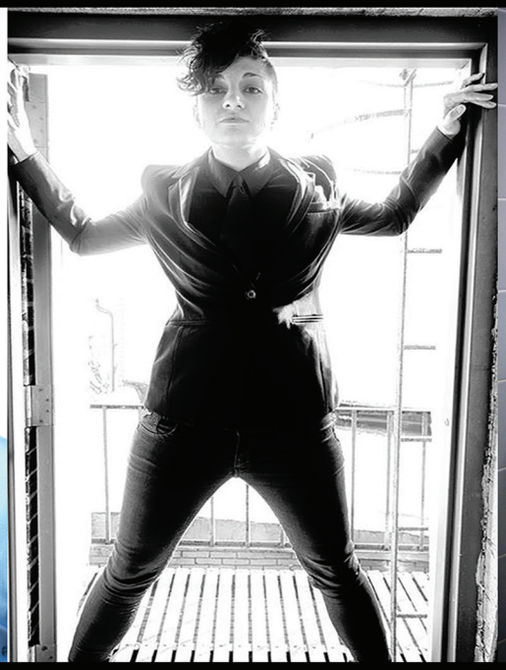
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THE JOCK'S GUIDE TO PRIDE

There are a lot of ways for you to show off your athletic prowess at Pride (or, to cheer on your athletic friends while you just enjoy the sunshine).



Mayhem vs. Chicago Dragons. Photo by Chris Perardi

THE RAINBOW RUN

Saturday, June 28
9:30 a.m.
Packet Pickup in Boom Island Park on Race Day

On your mark, get set, go! Lace up your sneaks and get ready for a bright, colorful fun run (yes, we used fun and run in the same sentence) that starts in Boom Island Park and winds through the streets of Minneapolis, filling the city with a rainbow of runners before reaching the finish line in Loring Park. The run wraps up right before the Ashley Rukes GLBT parade, so you'll still have time to take in the parade in all of its glory. Runners get a bright, colorful shirt and lots of post-run endorphins.

You can find race registration information at www.tcpride.org.

Cost is $30 until June 5, then $35 until online registration closes on June 24. Same-day registration will be available for $40.

STUDS VS. FEMMES: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH BASKETBALL

Symone Clay appears to have an endless amount of energy. A lifelong baller (her cousin is the WNBA's Tamara Moore), a mother, and an event planner and DJ by profession, Clay has found the time to grow her Studs vs. Femmes basketball game from a small event at a little park in Minneapolis to one of Pride's most popular sporting events. "The idea grew out of supporting health in our community," Clay explains, "Creating community activities beyond going to the club or grabbing a drink." Interested in participating? You can sign up at www.4studs-fems.eventbrite.com. Or, show up at 3:00 p.m. sharp for tipoff on Sunday, June 28th at the basketball courts at Loring Park to see if the Femmes can keep their winning streak and pull off a four-peat victory. If you're interested in lending a hand, either with event logistics or sponsorship, you can contact Symone at studs.femmes@gmail.com.

MEET THE MINNESOTA UNITED

Minnesota United Football Club holds the unofficial title of Handsomest Professional Soccer Team in Minneapolis. They also happen to be very good at soccer. Lucky for Pride-goers, they'll be at the Athletic Fields from 12–2 p.m. on Sunday. Improve your technique, run some drills, or just meet and greet your favorite players from the MN United FC. The hottest Loons in Minnesota invite fans of all ages and abilities to stop by their booth to test their skills, learn some new techniques or show off with a juggling contest and lots of great prizes. Huddle up: some of these babes will be at Pride.



Rainbow Run. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

PRIDE SPORTS SCHEDULE

Sponsored by *Lavender*

VOLLEYBALL:
Bump, set, and spike your way to volleyball infamy at Saturday's volleyball tournament. Games kick off at 8:00 a.m. at the Pride Sports Field (near the shuffleboard courts). Sign up your team at www.glassports.org.

RUGBY:
Once again, the Mayhem Rugby Football Club will be showing off their skills at their exhibition game at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday at the Pride Sports Field. If you want to get your scrum on, you can join the fun during the co-ed touch game at 3:30 p.m. Mayhem RFC and their lady rugby club partners, the Valkyries and the Menagerie, will have a booth for people who want to join the team, so put your game face on!

BASKETBALL
Studs vs. Femmes, 3:00 p.m. Sunday, June 28

SOCCER
MN United Football club drills, giveaways, and more.
Sunday, 12:00–2:00 p.m. at the athletic fields.

TENNIS
The United States Tennis Association will hold court all day on both Saturday and Sunday. If you're interested in learning the game or stepping up your skills, head to the tennis courts. They'll have experts available to help with equipment selection for players of all ages and those with adaptive needs.

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BY AMY ONGARO



Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

GET MARRIED AT PRIDE

Are those wedding bells we hear? The Pride festival is home to many GLBTQ resources and events — and as of 2014, that includes wedding ceremonies! Yes, you can get married at Pride. #DreamComeTrue

Last year, Pride expanded the offering from commitment ceremonies to weddings, and married six couples at the festival. The same package is available to couples this year. "I'm thrilled we are able to help people be legally married with 300,000 of their closest friends and community members in attendance!" said Dot Belstler, Twin Cities Pride executive director.

One-hour slots are available on Saturday and Sunday of Pride weekend. The package includes time to gather guests, get dressed, conduct the ceremony, and take pictures. The ceremony takes place in a white decorated tent, complete with a raised platform, sound system, and chairs for 50 guests, near the formal gardens and lake in Loring Park.

THE DETAILS:

A marriage license must be applied for at the Hennepin County Service Center at least five days before the wedding date and brought to the ceremony.

An officiant will be available, but couples are welcome to bring their own!

Couples may schedule a rehearsal with the onsite wedding coordinator on the Thursday or Friday before the weekend.

Couples wishing to get married at Pride can contact Mary Pokluda at mary@bumblebeepa.com or Dot Belstler at belstler@tcpride.org for more information.

Get Married at Pride Package
$400 Includes:
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PRIDE WEEKEND → BY AMY ONGARO



Boomer Town. Photo courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

BOOMER TOWN WELCOMES GLBTQ SENIORS

There's action heating up a comfortable, cool, shady area at Pride — complete with tables, umbrellas, and chairs to better connect with friends and the community.

Boomer Town, now in its third year, is a dedicated space in the park for GLBTQ seniors. Inspired by Harry Hartigan, a Prime Timers volunteer and activist for diversity and inclusion for seniors, Boomer Town offers a more relaxing and accessible space for GLBTQ seniors.

Resources and support in Boomer Town are intended specifically for these important members of our community, including information on volunteer opportunities, healthcare, community events, and more. It's also a great place to network with other like-aged and like-minded community members.

AARP Minnesota is the official sponsor of Boomer Town. They're also the 2015 Corporate Champion of Pride Award winners, for their dedicated partnership in providing this important resource. Two other organizations key in the partnership efforts include Prime Timers MSP and Little Brothers-Friends of the Elderly.

Special thanks to AARP Minnesota and partners for helping create this important pillar in the park.

PARTICIPANTS FOR BOOMER TOWN 2015:

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Metropolitan Area Agency on Aging
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Prime Timers Minneapolis-St Paul
Little Brothers–Friends of the Elderly
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PRIDE

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Complete schedule coming soon!

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RAINBOW RUN

Run Boom Island to Loring Park before the parade on June 28!

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BEST PLACES TO WORK 2015 for LGBT Equality 100% CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX

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BY AMY ONGARO





(From left) Nice Ride bike dock, photo by Hubert Bonnet; Pride Transportation Map, image courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

GETTING TO & AROUND PRIDE

Transportation options to get to (and around) Pride weekend have never been more plentiful. Check out these great options to have a safe and celebratory festival weekend:

BIKE IT

Biking is an easy option by way of our convenient bike share program, Nice Ride. If you're not already a Nice Ride member, $6 gets you a 24-hour pass to rent out a neon green bike for as many 30-minute intervals as you need. Make your way to the nearest station to rent a bike, then dock it at a station near your destination. There are two Nice Ride stations alongside the park, one located near Harmon Place and Maple Street, and the other near Willow Street and 14th Street. If you choose to BYOB(ike), there will be a bike check and lock location presented by Allina near the horseshoe courts in the park by 15th Street. Bike maps (thanks to Hedberg Maps) will be available on the Pride website, providing details on dedicated bike paths, bike-friendly roads, and Nice Ride stations.

DRIVE IT

Pride has partnered with Parking Panda (provider of online parking reservations) to provide guaranteed parking available for advance purchase at several parking ramp locations within easy walking distance to the event. Due to high traffic and likelihood of ramps selling out before the festival, it is strongly recommended that you purchase parking in advance (single day and two-day passes offered). Visit the Pride website for more details on parking ramp locations and passes. If you plan on drinking, consider using DDi (Drink and Drive Intelligently), a premier designated driver service that will drive you and your car home. Bonus extra: DDi is offering a $10 discount for Pride festival goers.

SHARE IT

Car2Go members will have the added convenience of a designated drop zone for the Smart Cars at the festival, located on 15th Street near the horseshoe courts. Uber will have an onsite location at the cul-de-sac in the northeast corner of the park on Yale Place. Other options are Lyft and your other favorite local taxi companies!

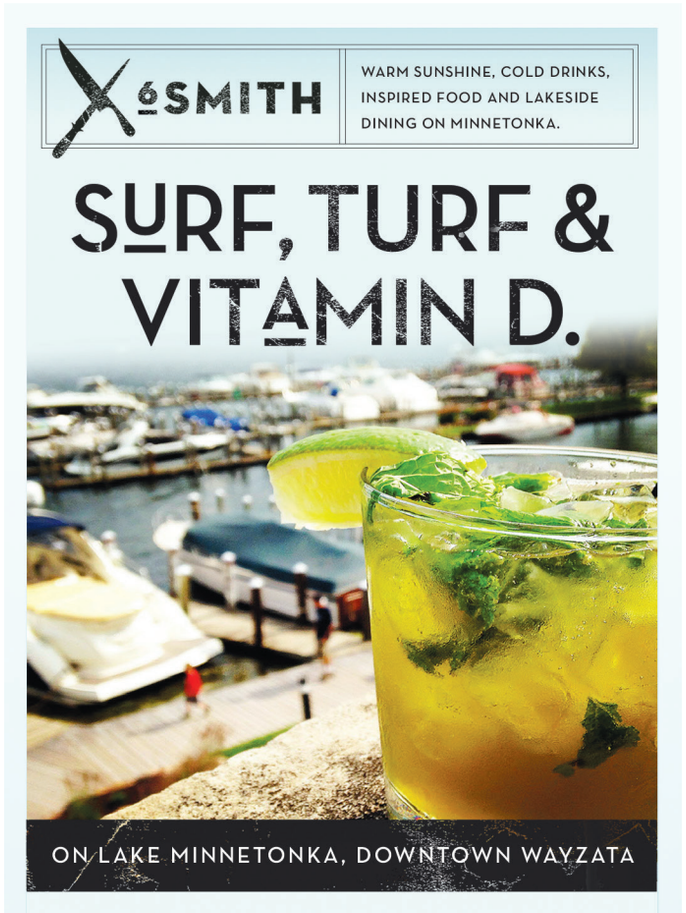
And Metro Transit is back this year with their Free Ride Pass for Sunday, June 29, so you can light rail or bus to and from the Rainbow Run 5K, parade, and a celebratory afternoon in the park between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. You'll be able to download your pass at www.tcpride.org.

TRIP IT

Out-of-towners have transportation options through air, train, and bus. Many flight carriers, including Delta Airlines (official airline for Twin Cities Pride), fly to and from the MSP International Airport. Delta's even offering a discount on first class fare for Pride-goers. See the Twin Cities Pride Facebook page for details.

Another option: Trains! Amtrak has daily service from Chicago, Fargo, Seattle, and cities in Wisconsin (Eau Claire, Wisconsin Dells, Milwaukee) to the Midway station, located between downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul. Long-distance bus options include Greyhound and Megabus.







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BY LINDSI GISH

TEACH ME HOW TO... DABBLE

THE BEER DABBLER IS BACK AND BETTER THAN EVER

For the fourth year in a row, The Beer Dabbler is back at Twin Cities Pride. Kicking off the festival weekend, Dabblers will gather in Loring Park to enjoy pairings between more than 35 different food truck/craft brew combos, a dance party, a killer entertainment lineup, and…humans on wooden poles. (For real. See right.)



Photos courtesy of Twin Cities Pride

The Beer Dabbler and Twin Cities Pride teams originally teamed up in 2011 to raise awareness about the proposed constitutional amendment that would've put a constitutional ban on same-sex marriages in Minnesota. Today, The Beer Dabbler is a cornerstone of Pride weekend, and offers an opportunity to celebrate progress while still raising awareness about important issues facing our GLBT community.

BRAND NEW IN 2015:

HUMAN FOOSBALL

As Joe with the Beer Dabbler told us, "It's exactly what it sounds like." Participants face off in two teams, aiming for the opponents' goal — all while keeping their hands connected via larger-than-life wooden poles. The only other rule? No spinning!
Special thanks to sponsor Can Can Wonderland for making this hilarity reality.

BLACK EYE COFFEE

Specifically for our dedicated and faithful dedicated drivers (but available to all), Black Eye will have cold press on tap in standard and nitro versions, free to all attendees but intended to help keep our designated drivers alert and provide a safer version of a buzz.

MORE SPACE!

There are more craft breweries and more food trucks than ever. And probably more attendees than ever (that's where you come in). In response, the Beer Dabbler at Pride will be about twenty-five percent larger. More space for dancing, we say.

The Beer Dabbler at Pride has become known for its killer music lineup, including the recurring dance party thanks to electronic-based three-piece dance band Apollo Cobra. (Yes, back this year!)

Other featured entertainers:
The **Prairie Fire Ladies Choir** will open the event with a national anthem and more tunes at 5:30. **PaviElle** will bring the soul, and follow at 7:00. Then, we dance. **Apollo Cobra** is back and Loring Park has never been more funky.

A portion of all proceeds from the event benefit Twin Cities Pride, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit.

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June 25 • Lily Tomlin, Orchestra Hall
June 26 • The Pride Beer Dabbler, Loring Park
June 27 • Pride in Concert, Loring Park
June 27-28 • The Pride Festival
June 28 • Rainbow Run, Boom Island Park
June 28 • The Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade

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#tcpride #TogetherWeCan

BY KATHLEEN BRADBURY

COMMUNITY COFFEE SHOPS

Coffee is always in season, and it's the perfect way to stay awake during the best season of all: Pride! As you plan your Pride festivities, be sure to include stops at these GLBTQ-owned and GLBTQ-friendly shops across the Twin Cities. No matter what caffeinated concoction you prefer (or what type of vibe you require while sipping your java), these cafés are all friendly, welcoming, and community-approved.

BLUE MOON COFFEE

3822 E Lake St., Minneapolis
www.drinkbluemoon.com

Since 1994, Blue Moon Coffee Cafe has been serving up steaming cups of locally roasted joe for the Lake Street community. Out and proud owner Lisa Berg strives to create a comfortable and welcoming environment for everyone who walks in the door. Customers can grab superior coffee and tea creations from friendly baristas, or munch on pastries from local vendors and sandwiches from Panini Creations.

Berg believes the best part about the cafe is that "many people from all over have taken 'ownership' of the Blue Moon." In addition to displaying the latest creations from local artists, the café also functions as a pick-up point for CSA shares from Webster Farm Organics. The eclectic and diverse customer base makes the café a great place with a local vibe for a first date with that cutie you eyed at Pride.

CAFE SOUTHSIDE

3405 Chicago Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.cafe-southside.com

If you're looking to enjoy a cup of coffee in a mindful, queer, intelligent, and artsy atmosphere, drop in to Cafe SouthSide, a café that has served as a casual meeting place and hub of queer activism since 2011. Co-owners Roxanne Anderson and Anna Meyer started the cafe in order to "keep the space safer for the queer and trans folks utilizing that cafe through the Minnesota Transgender Health Coalition (MTHC) and Trans Youth Support Network (TYSN)." Through their efforts, Cafe SouthSide "provides nourishment for our communities through safer space, good treats, healthier food, organic fair trade small farmer coffee, and art — centering on queer, trans, gender non-conforming, and people of color, while welcoming all."

Proudly owned and managed by two queer people of color, the space allows folks to socialize and organize within the queer community, and it offers opportunities for people to see themselves reflected within their community. The café also serves as an access point to additional support services located in the building, such as MTHC, The Exchange/Shot Clinic, RARE Productions, Transforming Families, Northbound Technology, and MN Care Partners.

In addition to supporting community activism, Anderson and Meyer cultivate a local artist community through displaying local art and hosting poetry readings and open mic nights. Additionally, Cafe SouthSide collaborates with local community organizations and programs that service myriad communities. Café customers can enjoy local baked goods, veggies from the café's community garden, and great coffee — all served with a smile.

THE COFFEE SHOP NORTHEAST

2852 Johnson St. NE, Minneapolis
www.thecoffeeshopne.com



Jeffrey Fisher of Fireroast Café. Photo by Sam Hagen

With open mic nights, literary readings, and seasonal specialty drinks, The Coffee Shop Northeast is thriving in the Audubon neighborhood. For the past five years, Jodi Lund and her sister, Jenni, have dished up "coffee, treats, food, and love." Co-owned by Jodi, Jenni, Jodi's wife April, and Jenni's husband Rich, Jodi notes that the cafe is "50 percent gay-owned but 100 percent gay-friendly!"

The café has been fully embraced by the Northeast community, requiring the family to expand their menu and double their seating area. Customers can enjoy exceptional Classic Cold Press, made with real Wisconsin maple syrup and soy milk, or sip on an Iced Miel with local honey from Skinny Jake's Fat Honey in Northeast Minneapolis. The expanded café menu in-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

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cludes fresh sandwiches, healthy deli salads, and options for gluten-free and vegan diners. Jodi suggests that guests save room for a mean slice of carrot cake, made and baked in house.

By sourcing as many products from local vendors and hosting events for the community, The Coffee Shop Northeast has that true Northeast vibe: friendly, open, and welcoming. Jodi adds that they are "community driven and supported" in everything they do: "We feel very fortunate to be where we are!"

FIREROAST CAFÉ

3800 37th Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.fireroastcafe.com

Three years ago, Jeffrey Fisher was looking for a way to rejuvenate his career and achieve his dream of becoming an entrepreneur. When Fisher and his husband had the opportunity to take over a failing business and turn it into his dream coffee shop, Fisher found that his spirit was restored in the process of restoring the business: "As I helped to reinvent and rejuvenate Fireroast, it was doing the same thing for me."

Now a bustling little stop in the Longfellow neighborhood, Fireroast Café has successfully developed into one of the community's favorite places for great food, great coffee, and great hospitality. Fisher's long run in a variety of corporate hospitality jobs makes him passionate about connecting with customers and creating special experiences for all who enter Fireroast's door. The café is committed to making each guest feel personally welcome and special; Fisher notes, "We're the kind of place where everybody knows everyone. We remember your name and who you are."

Locally roasted coffee from Up Coffee Roasters and Sebastian Joe's ice cream put the finishing flourishes on a menu where everything is made from scratch, in house, and to-order. The rosemary chicken salad sandwich is the iconic staple for lunch, but you can't go wrong with a cup of chicken and wild rice soup or the basil pesto goat cheese sandwich. Chai aficionados will swoon over their housemade chai, made from brewing an assam Indian tea with house-blended spices and fortified honey.



Tom DeGree & Dean Schlaak of Wilde Roast Cafe. Photo by E. Katie Holm

Whether customers want to mingle with neighbors and get to know their community or would prefer to retreat and set aside the hustle and bustle of a busy day, Fireroast Café provides an atmosphere that fosters strong bonds with the Longfellow community. Local artists display their work in the café, and the café hosts several artist "meet and greet" events for people to learn more about the artists, creating a friendly neighborhood vibe.

THE NICOLLET DINER & MUFFIN TOP CAFE

1424 Nicollet Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.muffintopcafe.com

Recently joining the mix of GLBT bars and restaurants in Loring Park is the Nicollet Diner and Muffin Top Cafe. Owned by Sam Turner and Dion Coker (who are engaged to be married soon!), the Muffin Top Cafe provides java and baked goods while the Nicollet Diner serves up a full menu. No matter where they sit, customers can enjoy delectable treats from both venues.

Turner notes that the joint venture between the venues has allowed them to create two unique yet complementary brands, with the Muffin Top Cafe allowing them to cater more specifically to the GLBT community. He adds, "While the Nicollet Diner's goal is to become a neighborhood staple frequented by all walks of life where all are welcome, Muffin Top Cafe gives us a direct conduit to our GLBT family and the ability to offer services, events, programming, and meeting space dedicated to the GLBT community and our allies."

In their quaint but modern space, local art and live plants create a relaxed and natural atmosphere. Guests can play board games or cards while enjoying the "super caffeinated" and super popular White Lightning Mocha, served up by friendly yet sassy baristas. Drinks are concocted with locally roasted beans and flavor syrups free from artificial colors and preservatives. For patrons on the go, a variety of fresh grab-and-go items are available, like the Asian Chicken Salad and the Spinach, Nut, and Honey wrap. And we can't overlook the fresh-baked sweets: muffins, cookies, scones, and donuts are all made in house.

The Muffin Top Cafe doesn't aspire to be the next big chain; Turner and Coker's focus is to "bring our neighbors the best choice when looking for a coffee shop…. We try our best to do it right; we seek out the best possible products and selections for our customers." As they gear up for their first Pride season, Turner and Coker are excited to participate in the event and form an even stronger bond to the community.



Twin Cities Leather & Latté. Image courtesy of TCL&L

TWIN CITIES LEATHER & LATTE

2717 Hennepin Ave. S, Minneapolis
www.twincitiesleather.com

Don't be intimidated by the "Leather" part of their name; Twin Cities Leather & Latte is a friendly establishment that welcomes everyone, regardless of what makes them unique. Still thriving after a year and a half of busi-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 58



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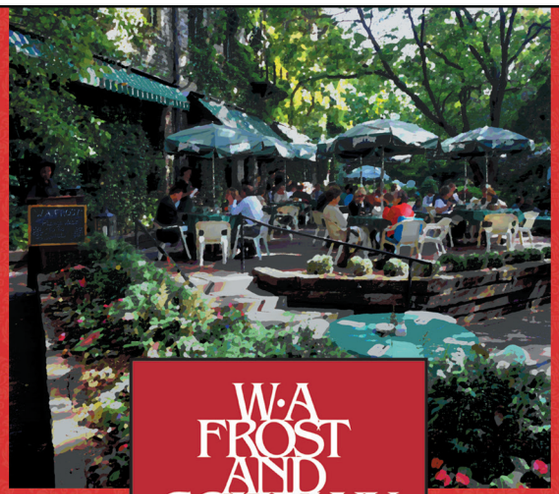


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ness, Twin Cities Leather & Latte is the only combined coffee shop/leather and sex toy shop in the world. In addition to its unique claim to fame, out and proud owners Karri Plowman and Tynan Fox add, "The brotherhood shared among all the staff and the community we serve is truly what makes this place unique."

The espresso bar features a full menu of handcrafted drinks, all made with locally roasted beans from Roastery 7. Fox believes that Roastery 7's beans "brew the way coffee is supposed to taste: bold and full-flavored but never sour." Non-coffee drinkers can enjoy a roasted chestnut chai or a cookie with steamed milk, or nibble on fresh bakery items from A Baker's Wife.

Twin Cities Leather & Latte believes in "Community First!" and provides a reservable basement community room for meetings, discussions, or small gatherings. Clients also appreciate how the shop is "always seeking to push boundaries of self, stigma, and identity." With its warm and welcoming environment, Twin Cities Leather & Latte is a space where "you can truly be who you are."

WILDE ROAST CAFE

65 Main St. SE, Minneapolis
www.wilderoastcafe.com

If you're enticed by a river view, stop by the Wilde Roast Cafe for coffee, drinks, and an extensive food menu. Co-owned by Tom DeGree and Dean Schlaak, Wilde Roast Cafe moved to the Mississippi riverfront four years ago, and the new location is more popular than ever. DeGree adds that all communities are welcome: "We put it out there 11 years ago that the Wilde Roast Cafe was for everyone; at any time you may see straight and gay couples sitting in the fireplace area."

Stop in and grab a latté or a scoop of house-made gelato before strolling along the river, or stay for dinner and end the night with a sweet treat from Chef Jeff. On beautiful summer days, dog-friendly patio seating is a must, while an indoor fireplace creates a cozy atmosphere on chillier evenings. The popular weekend brunch menu provides an array of options, including crème brûlée french toast, crab cake benedict, and their famous mac and cheese.

While the Wilde Roast Cafe offers an atmosphere perfect for conversation, DeGree and Schlaak's recent restaurant venture, Mattie's on Main (located right next door to Wilde Roast), offers a vibrant entertainment calendar including Drag Brunch on Sundays and regular gigs by Cabaret Duo Erin Schwab and Jay Fuchs. No matter which venue you prefer, you can always expect welcoming and friendly service from the exceptional staff.

WORKHORSE COFFEE BAR

2399 University Ave. W, St. Paul
www.workhorsecoffee.com

Located half a block west from the Raymond Green Line Light Rail stop is St. Paul's newest coffee stop, Workhorse Coffee Bar. Since opening on May 4 in the Raymond/University neighborhood, it's apparent that not even the tiniest detail has been overlooked by co-owners and partners Ty Barnett and Shannon Forney. As the "instigator of genuine relationships, builder of beverages, and agent of integrity and hard work," Barnett notes, "We've been thoughtful about creating perfectly balanced ratios in our coffee drinks." Order a cappuccino, and you'll be delighted that the drink is served in the traditional way, with charged water and a Finnish chocolate mint.

The space (which has historically been a coffee shop) has been restored to embrace the original industrial character of the building, and vintage industrial finds have been incorporated into the décor. The espresso bar has been mounted with large faux rivets, which makes it look "like the hull of a ship." Barnett explains, "It's intended to be leaned against, chatted over, and served at with the pride of old-fashioned customer service." Customers can sit at large work-tables and intimate two-tops, and small chairs in the front window allow kids (or kids-at-heart) to watch the train go by. Barnett adds, "We all feel like a kid when the train goes by, am I right?!"

In addition to providing a vast range of coffee and tea drinks, Workhorse Coffee Bar serves up special treats, such as the tempting vanilla espresso milkshake.



Ty Barnett & Shannon Forney of Workhorse Coffee Bar. Photo by Pavlica Photography

Pastries, including "killer" ham and swiss croissants from SugaRush, a neighboring bakery, are a perfect way to start the morning. The lunch menu features a daily rotation of soups, flatbread pizzas, and a hummus plate, all of which are "reasonably priced small plates, locally sourced, and served with pride."

While they've been perfecting the micro-details of their new shop, Barnett and Forney have also been awarded funding to create the Smallest Museum in St. Paul. Forney, who identifies as an "artist, prime mover-shaker, and secretary of planning," has been the "tour-de-force" behind the museum, which will open on July 1. Located outside to the right of the shop's front door is a vintage fire-hose cabinet that is tucked into the facade of the building. This cabinet has been transformed into a two-foot-by-three-foot micro-museum, and "offers a platform to engage a street audience, LRT Green Line Train commuters, and customers of Workhorse Coffee Bar."

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Need more coffee? Be sure to check out Cuppa Java, another GLBT-friendly café located in the Bryn Mawr area. Cuppa Java serves food, beer, and wine in addition to excellent coffee drinks. Customers love the hot sandwiches, and outdoor seating allows patrons to enjoy beautiful Minneapolis summer days.







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BY ANDY LIEN

RECIPES FROM RAINBOW CHEFS

I love going to restaurants a little bit more than I love making good food, but both are high in my esteem. This unbalanced scale has everything to do with time, energy, and inclination; the restaurant is the path of least resistance in every sense but where to park. So, when I go out and experience dishes that I can incorporate into my own recipe box at home, it's the best of both worlds. I asked three of our local rainbow chefs for recipes to share with our readers and I can't wait to try making them in my own kitchen.

RAMP COMPOUND BUTTER

Chef Shack, www.chefshack.org
Chef Lisa Carlson and Carrie Summer

Ramps are a species of onion found in the wild, the farmers market, or the produce section of your grocery store or co-op. Combined with butter, the flavorful result can be used as a spread, a topping for steak, or anywhere you need the salty, oniony accent.

Ingredients

1 1/2 pounds ramps, trimmed and cleaned
4 pounds unsalted butter, cut up and at room temperature
2 lemons, zested and juiced
Salt and pepper to taste
Thyme (optional)

Directions

1. Trim the ends off of the ramps and clean them well under cold, running water.
2. Blanch them quickly (30 seconds) by dropping the ramps in a large pot of salted, boiling water, and then shock them in ice water.
3. Drain the ramps, squeezing as much liquid out as you can. With a sharp knife, thinly slice the ramps.
4. In a large bowl (or KitchenAid with a paddle), mix well the butter, lemon juice, lemon zest, ramps, salt, and pepper.
5. On sheets of parchment, form logs of butter of approximately 1/2 pounds each, and roll the parchment tightly around the butter.
6. Put the butter logs in two sets of freezer bags and seal tightly, removing all the air, and store in the freezer.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62



Carrie Summer and Lisa Carlson of Chef Shack. Photo by Mike Hnida



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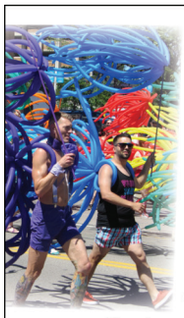
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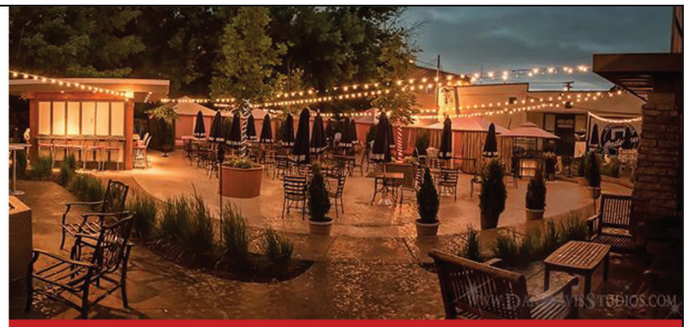
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Craig Ball of Pilgrimage Café. Photo by Andy Lien



Chipa Guazu beneath BBQ Carnitas Benedict.
Photo by Andy Lien

CHIPA GUAZU

Pilgrimage Café
www.pilgrimagecafe.com
Chef Craig Ball

Chipa Guazu is a traditional Paraguayan side dish, my favorite from my time in the Peace Corps. We bake ours thin so we can replace English muffins on our Turkey Mole and BBQ Carnitas Benedict dishes, but traditionally it is baked in a cake pan for thick, cake-like pieces. The onion and cheese add the perfect sweet and salty balance and the egg ensures a light fluffy texture.

Ingredients

2 pounds fresh corn kernels
3 whole eggs
½ of a large white or yellow onion, finely chopped
5 ounces queso fresco, crumbled
5 ounces butter cut into small chunks, soft but not melted
2/3 cup milk
1 ½ teaspoons salt
¾ cup corn masa flour

Directions

1. Place all ingredients except the onion and cheese into a food processor and pulse until well mixed but not blended smooth.
2. Fold in onions and cheese.
3. Pour into well-greased baking dish, also lined with parchment. We use a sheet tray for thinner pieces, but it is traditionally baked in a cake pan. You could also use a cast iron skillet.
3. Bake at 375 degrees for about an hour. Keep checking and remove when the top is golden brown and the center no longer jiggles. (If you have a convection oven, bake without the fan for 45 minutes and then use the fan for the last 15.)
4. Serve warm with any meal, it works great with BBQ, or anywhere else you might serve corn bread.

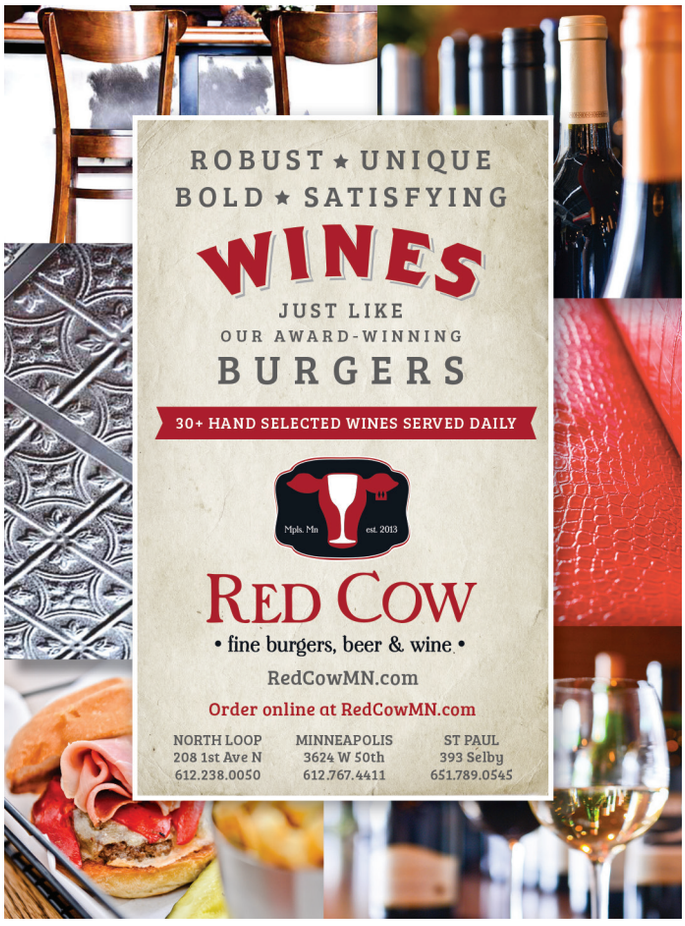
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Joan Schmitt and Susan Dunlop on the patio at Joan's in the Park. Photo by Andy Lien

BROWN BUTTER PUDDING

Joan's in the Park, www.joansinthepark.com
Chef Susan Dunlop and Joan Schmitt

A lovely way to end a gorgeous night on the patio at Joan's in the Park is with the cool, smooth brown butter pudding. Or, make it for yourself to enjoy on your deck or patio. Chef Susan's most-requested recipe, this velvety and decadent dessert will please your summer dinner party, your candle-lit dinner for two, or your own sweet soirée for one.

Ingredients

3/4 cup brown sugar
5 tablespoons corn starch
½ teaspoon salt
2 cups milk
1 ½ cups heavy cream
½ cup browned butter
2 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Using a medium saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch, and salt.
2. Once incorporated add the milk and cream and cook over medium high heat, whisking continuously, so the milk mixture does not stick to the bottom of the pan.
3. After 2 minutes add the brown butter.
4. Bring to a boil over medium heat, again whisking continuously, and cook for about 1 minute.
5. Remove from heat and whisk in butter and vanilla.
6. Divide pudding into 7 serving containers and refrigerate uncovered until completely cool.
7. Refrigerate pudding for at least 2 hours prior to serving.
8. Serve with your favorite



Brown Butter Pudding. Photo by Andy Lien


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OUR SPOTLIGHT → BY JOHN TOWNSEND



***Choir Boy* cast members.** Photo by Lauren Mueller



The Illusion. Photo by Charles Gorrill

CHOIR BOY

June 16 – July 5
Guthrie Theater, 818 S. 2nd St., Mpls.
(612) 377-2224
www.guthrietheater.org

Tarell Alvin McCraney's *Choir Boy* is set present day in a homophobic prep school for black male youths and examines the coming out process. Director Peter Rothstein says, "The play juxtaposes this coming out/coming of age story with African American spirituals. This particular intersection of sexuality, religion, music, and history is a dynamic I've never staged before." McCraney has become one of the hottest young playwrights of recent years. He is best known for his *In the Red and Brown Water* trilogy.

DAMN YANKEES

June 16 – 28
Ordway Center, 345 Washington St., St. Paul
(651) 224-4222
www.ordway.org

James Rocco, the Ordway's producing artistic director known for his flair for musicals, is staging the ultimate crowd-pleaser, *Damn Yankees*. He calls it a "classic golden age musical comedy: funny, sexy, and tuneful. A little risqué. It was choreographer Bob Fosse's first big show and well we all know *Chicago* — you can see and hear those origins in *Damn Yankees*."

Rocco says he is streamlining the show in a way reminiscent of *Chicago*: "Sleek, fast-paced, and pulpy. My theory is to understand the authors' [George Abbott and Douglas Wallop] original intent. Why did the audience of the time respond to it? Then I think what about that intent is pertinent to today's audience and how can I convey that so the material is experienced as fresh. I call it re-envisioning. I am honored to have the opportunity to spend time with the work of George Abbott, a master of musical comedy."

Monte Wheeler who played Frank-n-Furter in Ordway's 2007 *The Rocky Horror Show* plays the Devil. Tari Kelly of various Ordway musicals plays the iconic role of Lola. Recall the famous tune *Whatever Lola Wants Lola Gets*.

THE ILLUSION

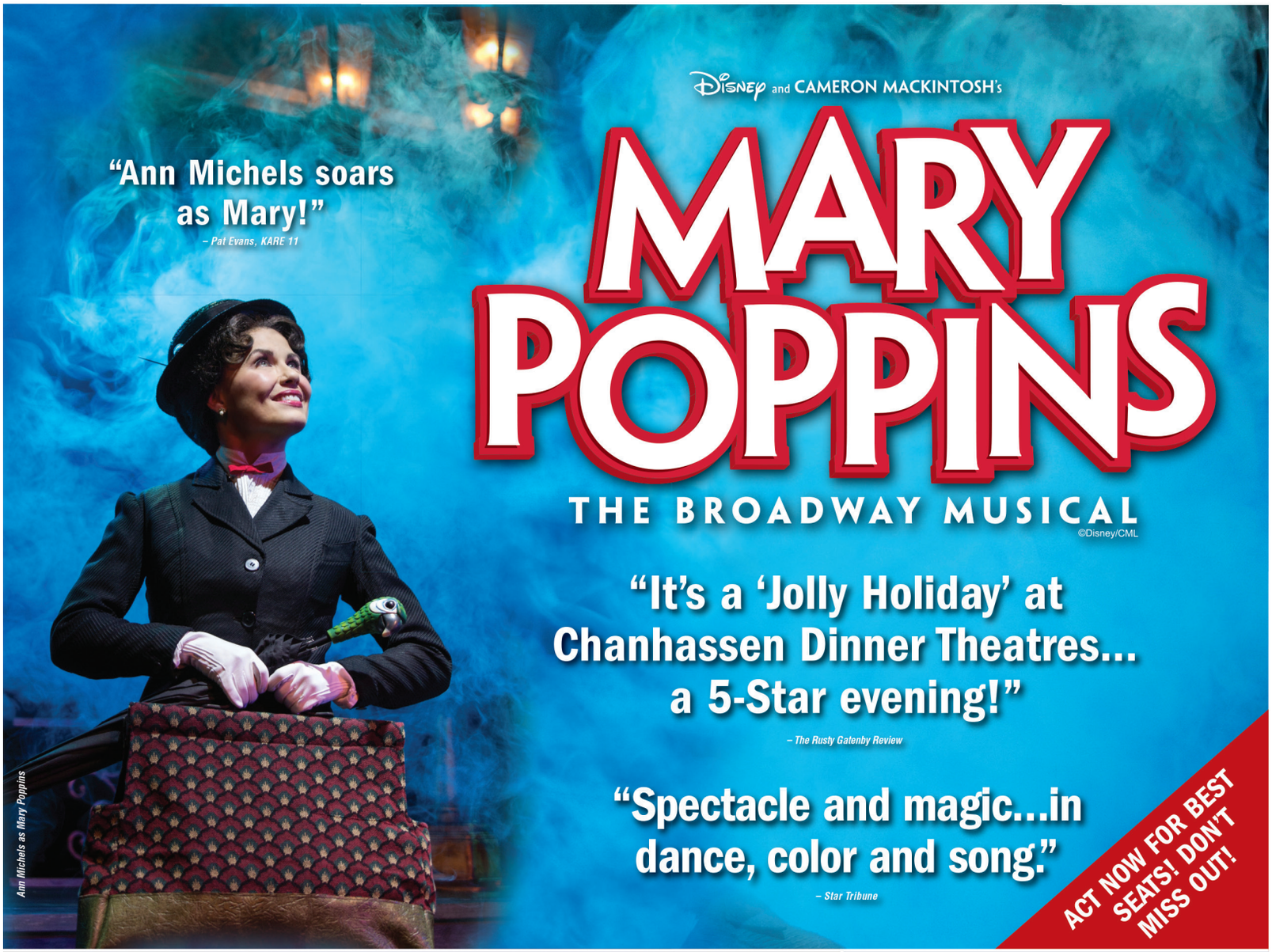
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Damn Yankees. Photo courtesy of the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68 →

"A heaping spoonful of FUN!" – FOX 9 News



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MARY POPPINS

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– Star Tribune

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Queertopia 10: A Cabaret Celebration of Queer Love. Photo by Anna Min of Min Enterprises Photography LLC

Gay playwright Tony Kushner's adaptation of Pierre Corneille's 17th century comedy, *L'Illusion Comique*, is an imaginative look at a father, his son, and a magician. Corneille took great liberties with narrative form. Through the course of the action the father comes to understand things about his son he would not have imagined. Theatre Pro Rata Artistic Director Carin Bratlie says, "Corneille called his play a 'strange monster'. It's odd and captivating. Kushner's adaptation keeps all of that wonder and adds in a fresh and modern taste of language and humor." Kushner made a big splash in the 1990s with his anti-Reagan AIDS work, *Angels in America*. *The Illusion* plays in the Andy Boss space at Park Square Theatre.

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You may have noticed that the Phoenix Theater in South Minneapolis in the old Brave New Workshop space is GLBTQ-friendly. On the second and fourth Tuesday evenings of each month, Willie Cherry is hosting three-to-five local performers to take the stage with comedy, music, theater, and physical performance. Cherry says, "You never know what to expect and it keeps things fresh. We work really hard to make the cabaret a safe space for performers and audience alike without any type of creative censorship. It is a place where work gets made without preconception or expectation. People and personalities are equalized, anxiety is controlled, and we get to the root of why as artists we do this."

QUEERTOPIA 10: A CABARET CELEBRATION OF QUEER LOVE

June 24–27
Intermedia Arts, 2822 Lyndale Ave. So., Mpls.
(612) 871-4444

SPECIAL MIDNIGHT EVENT

June 20
Bedlam Theatre Lowertown, 213 E. 4th St., St. Paul
www.bedlamtheatre.org

Time for the 10th Annual *Queertopia* event of queer artists at Intermedia Arts and Bedlam Theatre. Jeffry Lusiak, co-curator, shares, "I am thrilled that *Queertopia* is celebrating its ten-year anniversary in epic fashion. We will stretch over two weekends in two cities, host performances by over 30 local queer artists, and honor the journey of the Twin Cities queer community through art and celebration." Nico Swenson and Harry Waters Jr. will curate *Queertopia's* midnight event, June 20, at Bedlam Lowertown.

SKYLARK OPERA SUMMER FESTIVAL 2015

Through June 21
E.M. Pearson Theatre, Concordia University
312 N. Hamline Ave. St. Paul
(612) 343-3390
www.skylarkopera.org

Skylark Opera's ever-popular summer festival features *Lavender* community favorite Stephen Sondheim with a work that features several of his tunes from works like *Sweeney Todd*, *Into the Woods*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and *Sunday in the Park with George*. Director Bob Neu says, "Every actor, every director wants to do a Sondheim show — his keen understanding of the human condition, the awe-inspiring use of language, the haunting melodies." It runs in alternating performances with Giacomo Puccini's *La Rondine*.



Skylark Opera Summer Festival 2015. Photo courtesy of Skylark Opera

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Sarah Hicks, conductor

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Sarah Hicks, conductor / Sam Bergman, violist-host

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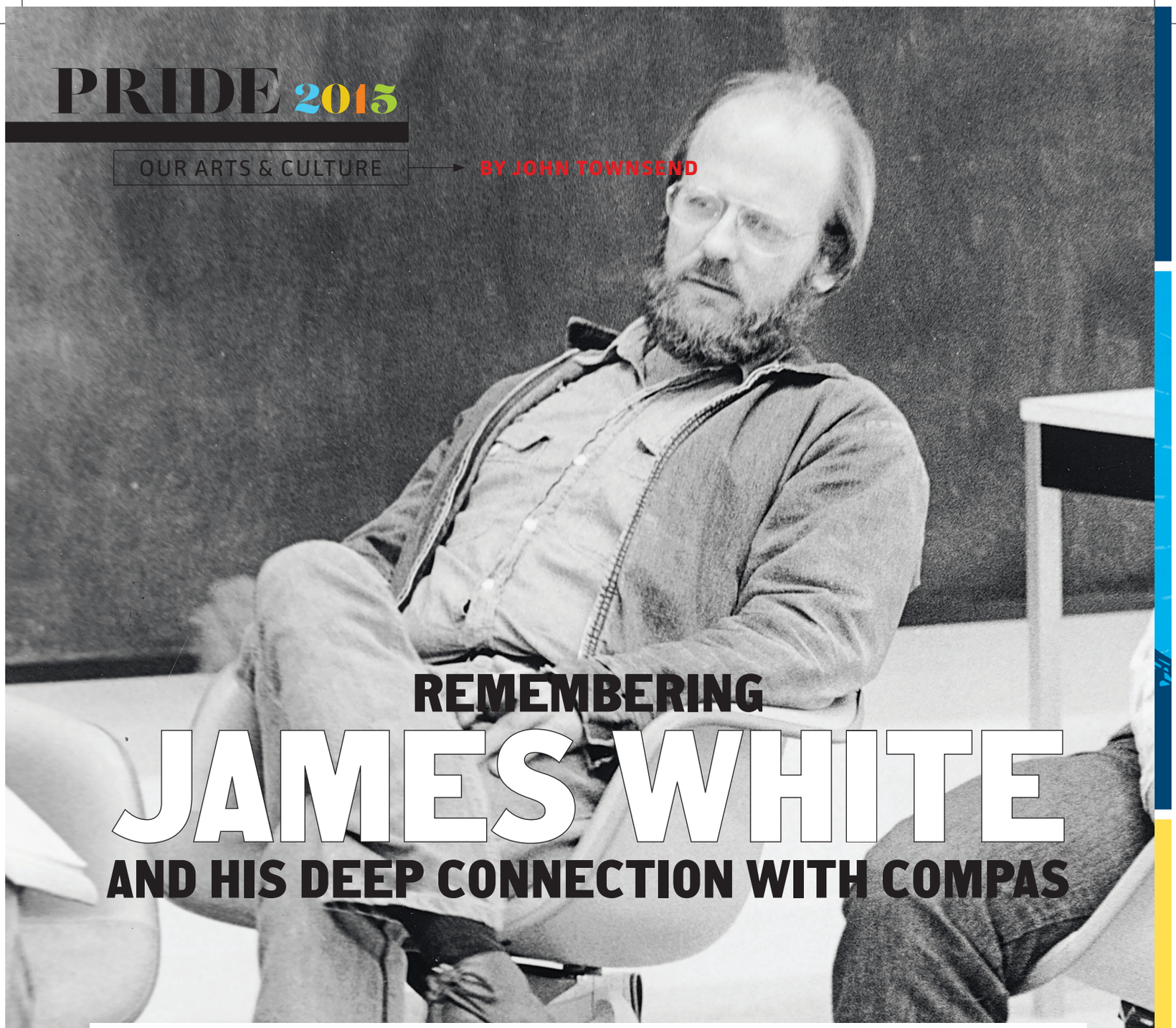
PHOTOS Hicks: Greg Helgeson
Singin': Used with permission of The Gene Kelly Image Trust

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BY JOHN TOWNSEND

REMEMBERING JAMES WHITE AND HIS DEEP CONNECTION WITH COMPAS



When gay poet James L. White (1936–1981) came to Minnesota in the 1970s, the Twin Cities had become the major cultural center between Chicago and the West Coast, and would come to rival Chicago. The Walker Art Center, the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and Minnesota Orchestra had been nationally esteemed for decades. The Tyrone Guthrie Theater and Children's Theatre Company, both founded in the 1960s, were achieving international status. The art of the written word began to find institutional legs in the '70s with the Playwrights' Center and The Loft Literary Center and in the '80s with Graywolf Press.

Corporate donors, individuals, foundations, and agencies contributed and were formed to contribute to the nurturing and development of talent and of making Twin Cities arts accessible to communities. One such organization was COMPAS (Community Programs in the Arts and Sciences). Its origins were rooted in a moment in 1967 when the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) approached Molly LaBerge (now Molly Taylor) to set up a pilot program to give high school students classroom experience with professional poets who were paid. It was the end of the Johnson administration and it was a part of the President's dream of decentralizing the arts out of the west and east coasts so diverse voices between them could be heard. Despite national political storms, Minnesota kept to its pro-arts course and in 1974 COMPAS was born in St. Paul, with Taylor chosen to lead the organization. It also came to expand its assistance toward other art forms, not only poetry. For over 40 years they've been a source of enlightenment.

In the '70s Minneapolis-St. Paul was sometimes referred to as the San Francisco of the Midwest, both favorably and unfavorably. Artists, writers, and gay men were drawn to it for its freedom of expression, its opportunities, and its social tolerance. James White was one of those pilgrims. This was a time when being gay or lesbian was something few people talked openly about. Transgender was a term that had not come into wide use. That said, gays and lesbians had long found their niche in arts communities. Again, White was one such man.

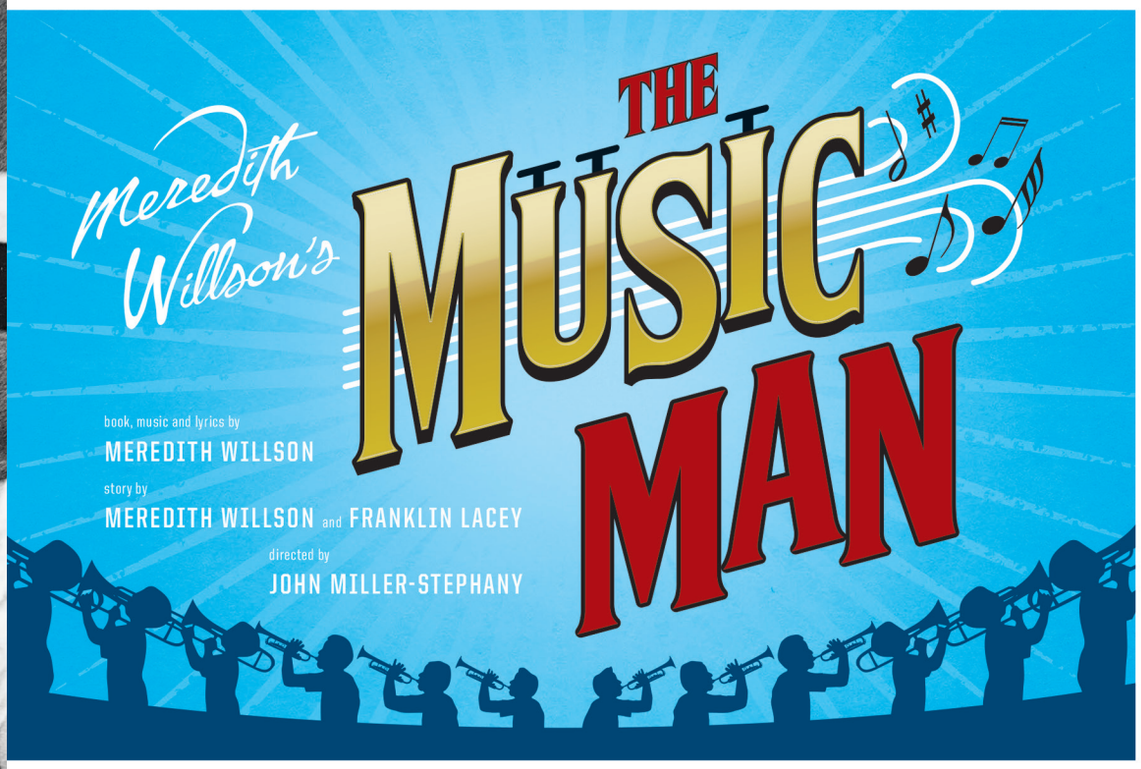
White was born in Indianapolis and ultimately earned an MA in Literary Criticism from Colorado State University. COMPAS made

Photo courtesy of Molly Taylor/COMPAS

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72

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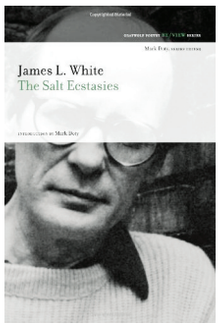
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him part of a pilot program where he taught on a Navajo reservation and in Minnesota public schools. He edited poetry collections of work by Native American children and adults. His own poetry was reviewed favorably and his own poetry volume, *The Salt Ecstasies*, published by Graywolf Press the year after his death, is a modern classic and vital reading for lavender people. It is dedicated to Kate Green. Poet and critic Carl Phillips wrote, "White's was a crucial voice to encounter, for what is confirmed as possible — longing, homosexual longing, the expression of that longing in a poem."

Mark Doty, who edited Graywolf's poetry Re/View series of essential poets, wrote the introduction for the series *The Salt Ecstasies* volume. When you open the book he says, "White combined the rhetorical strategies of deep image poetry with a startling emotional directness and a frank treatment of sexual longing. White's work has remained a significant influence for a number of gay American poets, but his consideration of desire and loneliness reaches beyond any categories of identity."

When reading about others' impressions of White and hearing the thoughts of those who knew him, he was affectionate and when reading his poetry you can sense that. Taylor has fond memories of her friendship with White. She shares, "James had empathy for people who didn't have much. Much of his life had been stifled. He knew he would find kindred spirits here. He knew that he could bloom more as a person and as a writer if he could be with more people in an arts-focused community. James was very kind to everybody and was very interested in the writers he worked with and their writing. 'You're a really good writer. I'm interested in your ideas,' he'd say. He was a leader but he wouldn't have thought of himself as that. He was a leader by example in being strong and true to himself. My two girls adored him. He loved nature and he loved owls."

That love of nature brings to mind that Taylor and White attended a three-week Scottish Arts Council seminar at the Isle of Sky. There they connected with administrators, teachers, and writers. Time was spent at a school where the Celtic language was spoken. It's the deep connection between nature and language that emanates from White's poetry. And erotic feelings are germane to nature. Some of the people who knew White in his Minneapolis years knew he was gay. Others did not. For those activists who would insist that was an issue, I'd beg to differ. It was a completely different time.

MacArthur Award-winning writer Patricia Hampl, a close friend of White's, recalls his untimely death: "Jim died of congestive heart failure, actually just before the scourge of AIDS hit — a term he probably never heard, though I sometimes think people assume (given the timing) that he was a victim of that terrible time. He would have needed a heart transplant to survive, but that was not possible (I no longer remember why)."

Hampl continues, "We were all so young (though Jim was somewhat older) that I don't think we understood he was dying; not until toward the end. Maybe Kate Green was wiser." She observes: "Jim had been a dancer in an earlier career. He had a dramatic flair, and an utterly beguiling sense of fun; sweetly wicked and the kindest friend imaginable. He was a very fine poet, and we all (I say 'we all' meaning poets who got to know each other working for COMPAS in the Writers in the Schools early days) adored him. He had a sly sense of humor. It's hard to describe someone who could gossip and yet not be cruel. Like many of us, Jim was deeply touched by the poetry of James Wright, and the clarity of his lines came, I think, from that. He was an elegant lyric poet."

When White passed away in July 1981, Hampl was on Minnesota's North Shore working on a book. She wrote a poem for and to him titled *Last Letter*. Find it in her second book of poems, *Resort and Other Poems*.

In 1983 the gay literary quarterly, the *James White Review* was founded by Grey Baysans, Paul Emond, and Phil Willkie. Emond left in 1985. Baysons resigned in 1991. It was transferred to the Lambda Literary Foundation in Washington, DC in 1998. Willkie was listed as publisher emeritus until it ceased publication in 2004. During Willkie's era the quarterly developed national and international prestige, and James White's name became far more widely known. Willkie reminisces, "I enjoyed the business side, started going to the nation's book shows and doing an annual reading in New York from 1986 that had hundreds attending."

In the present day when the written word and art generated by corporate interests permeates consciousness, James L. White hearkens to a time when a human being with a vision could clearly stand on the foundation of his or her individuality and create with the faith that if it was good, it would come to be known and appreciated. Willkie's hands-on approach to getting the word out is also exemplary of such a time. Taylor's diligence and tenacity helped ensure that opportunities would indeed knock and schoolchildren would benefit and develop from that. We all stand on their shoulders and can draw inspiration from their achievements. Thankfully, there are still organizations and individuals who champion the artist. COMPAS is still around despite the wild political and economic storms of recent years, as are many other arts-sustaining groups. If anything, the drive to reach as many different people and groups is even stronger. Momentum can build more possibilities.

COMPAS Executive Director Dawne Brown White (no relation to James) observes that "what makes COMPAS really unique is we have made it possible for people to discover their own voice and experience art-making, guided by practicing and talented teaching artists like Jim White. For more than 40 years, we have worked within communities, especially those underserved by the arts establishment including women's shelters, juvenile justice centers, and older adult housing residences. Daily our work reminds us that everyone's story matters, and every person deserves the opportunity to learn to express their thoughts, feelings, hopes, and dreams by experiencing the joy of creating. COMPAS also remains a leader in helping Minnesota expand our horizons by maintaining a diverse roster of artists who teach their art form by presenting authentic cultural performances."

In conclusion, from time to time I come across out gays and lesbians who pooh-pooh the arts, which is their call and their right. And they tend to be few and far between. That said, I also run across gays and lesbians who seem not to understand the level of society's acceptance of them is generally supported by the arts presence in a community. If you are someone, like me, who came to the Twin Cities because it was a GLBT mecca, then you owe thanks to the arts infrastructures here. The collective emotional infrastructure of a brilliant arts scene is all the better for lavender folks. Whether an art work is focused on lavender issues or not, it probably reflects some kind of creative process that engages something beyond linear ways of thinking that drive standard prejudices. So, if you are lavender, art is in your best interest.

For more information about COMPAS, go to www.compas.org.
The Salt Ecstasies *by James L. White is available at www.graywolfpress.org*





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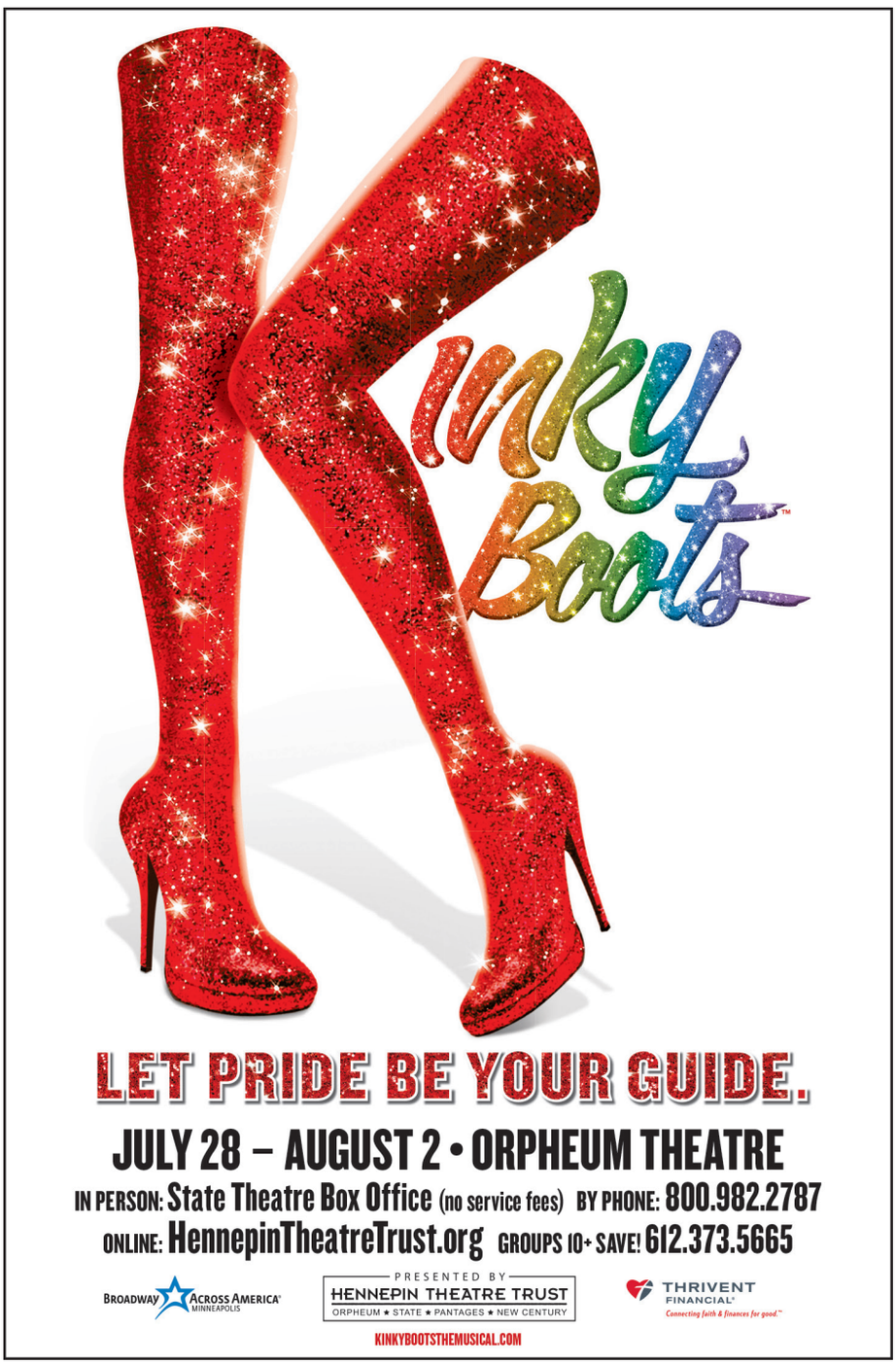
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BY JOHN TOWNSEND



Chvala in *French Twist*. Photo by V. Paul Virtuccio

JOYOUS ASSURANCE: A PROFILE ON DIRECTOR-CHOREOGRAPHER JOE CHVALA

Joe Chvala has scaled the heights of the Twin Cities performing arts scene. He navigates the experimental and the mainstream with joyous assurance as both a choreographer and as a director. Chvala's innovative Flying Foot Forum percussive dance company has played in the U.S., France, and Russia. He has directed the Guthrie Theater's *A Christmas Carol* three times, is putting the finishing choreographic touches on their production of *The Music Man*, and has choreographed the Children's Theatre's current staging of *Peter Pan*.

Lerner and Loewe's indictment of male chauvinism, *My Fair Lady,* seems to be a mystical touchstone in Chvala's life as it marks certain turning points. It was a production of *My Fair Lady* his grandmother took him to at age five that triggered his imagination. It was Minnesota Opera's production of *My Fair Lady* that put him in touch with actors and other theater artists soon after his move to Minneapolis in 1990. It was the Guthrie's 2014 production

CONTINUED ON PAGE 76

Powderhorn Art Fair



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of *My Fair Lady* that he choreographed two years ago which became the biggest box office hit in the fabled regional theater's history.

Growing up in Madison, Wisconsin set the stage for a career in theater and dance. At age 12 Chvala was cast in the title role of *Oliver!* at a community theater. He had rigorously practiced the show's tune *Where is Love?* and obviously made a strong impression at auditions. From that point on he played Hansel, Pinocchio, and Peter Pan at the Madison Children's Theater. He says, "I played all the Lost Boys in the world." As a teen he also played in more mature works such as the lead in the pacifist drama *Summertree* and the Emcee in *Cabaret.*



Fireball. Photo by Anne Marsden

Chvala recalls, "I remember my first inclination to make theater came from a desire to create, in the real world, the worlds in my imagination, because I knew that I saw the world in a different way and people would love to see some of the things I saw. I was also a bit shy as a kid. It took a long time for me to find the words or the nerve to explain the complex things I thought. So theater was a place where I knew how to communicate the large ideas that few had the patience to listen to in the real world."

Chvala went on to enroll at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he earned a BS in English Education. This advanced his understanding of literature which is vital for a theater career. He points out the importance of "being able to analyze. I'm always in awe of novelists."

During college he auditioned at Wilson Street East Dinner Playhouse to be a singing waiter but found himself cast in the role of Lucky in *Dames at Sea.* Chvala went on to enhance various Madison stages during his college years. Acting credits from those years include *Stop the World – I Want to Get Off, Child's Play,* a Nixon spoof, *Trust Me*, and *Ah, Wilderness!*

But just as consequential, if not more, was that Chvala, as he says, "got hooked on music theater." So he instinctively enrolled in jazz dance and ballet classes at UWM and had long loved the folk dancers on Madison's Library Mall. He says, "There is a tradition for that in Madison. I was very intrigued by that. It was beautiful and wonderful."

After leaving UMW Chvala taught high school in Minocqua, Wisconsin for two years. He started their drama program, directed six shows there, and saved up to move to New York where his goal was to work as an actor. He studied acting at Berghoff Studio with Bill Hickey and studied tap dance independently with Bob Audi, who taught Mandy Patinkin and Joel Grey. He also trained in traditional Broadway hoofer style and rhythm tap with Brenda Buffalino. Chvala points out, "I wanted to find my own way. I have encouraged my students to study with a lot of different people, not to be completely imprinted by one mentor. I think that's pretty important for someone who wants to create. When I was living in New York if something sounded different I would go see it. It was the '80s! Really exciting and fun. I would just soak it up."

Living almost seven years in New York, Chvala got much work on cruise ships and in dinner theaters. He shares, "Had I not been in a relationship I probably would have left sooner. I wanted to do my own work and I wanted to find a place easier to do that." Then, as fate would have a it, a friend playing in *42nd Street* on Broadway told Chvala that another friend was trying to get out of a high school teaching contract in Sweden but had to have someone replace him. Chvala jumped at the chance and rather than staying for one semester he ended up staying two years.

For Chvala, Gothenburg, Sweden was a consciousness shift. He reflects, "Seeing such a different way of approach, the world was a great thing. Being gay outside my own country, I was sort of liberated. Not to have the eye of your society all the time. I was on the outside. I was an American teaching art forms that are American — musical theater and tap. I probably would have stayed there forever if it weren't for not seeing family."

When Chvala returned to the U.S. he says, "I became very political about being gay. I started to go to Gay Pride. I'd never gone before. I had been in a relationship with a man for four years but my parents didn't know. They knew him but — blinders — they didn't know we were in a relationship." However, his parents, and whole family, became accepting of Chvala's orientation. He feels this was destined as his father's family was very friendly with a gay couple who owned a drug and gift store in their small Wisconsin town.

In 1990 Chvala came to Minneapolis and was cast in Minnesota Opera's staging of *My Fair Lady*, a big show with lots of artists that placed him in the thick of the Twin Cities' vibrant performing arts scene. He remembers thinking, "People from theaters all around would be there so you would get connected quickly."

In those early Twin Cities years Chvala was a substitute teacher for Bloomington public schools, began teaching tap at the U of M, and sang and danced for a year at Chanhassen Dinner Theatres. Earning a slot in the Walker Art Center Out There Series's Late Night Showcase he brought forth his percussive dance aesthetic and performed with the beguiling drumming ensemble, Savage Aural Hotbed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 78

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La Cage aux Folles. Photo by Vicki Madsen

In 1991 Chvala formed his Flying Foot Forum percussive dance company, which emerged on a wave at the time when STOMP and Savion Glover were putting their stamp on the world dance scene. Chvala describes percussive dance as "any kind of dance that makes percussive or rhythmic music by the actual act of dancing. Flying Foot Forum uses all sorts of modes of producing music while dancing — we use vocalization, we stomp, we clog, we slap ourselves and others. We hit other things and instruments. All of this is under the umbrella of percussive dance for me."

That percussive originality blended with his eclectic understanding of dance in general has clearly broadened his demand. Children's Theatre Artistic Director Peter Brosius points out that Chvala "creates works of such invention, precision, and surprise. I love working with him and watch how he layers his work with delightful detail. He truly fills a stage with energy and passion. His knowledge of the world of dance is so vast and his imagination is prodigious."

2005 was significant. Walker Art Center, the most prestigious contemporary art center between the west coast and Chicago, if not New York, had commissioned what would become his majestic *Between the Fire and Ice* in collaboration with transcendent folk vocalist, Ruth MacKenzie, and again, Savage Aural Hotbed. That year he also advised on movement for the Guthrie's *Oedipus.*

It was also the year of *Fireball.* History Theatre Artistic Director Ron Peluso recalls that "Joe was a major collaborator in this project and the lead artist. He worked closely with our playwright Roger Neiboer and composer Peter Ostroushko to create a beautiful dance theater piece in which he was director, choreographer, and actor. His vision for the show was true to History Theatre's mission: as we took this tragedy of 'the Hinckley Fire' and found humor, courage, and inspiration in the characters that Roger and Peter had crafted. Joe's imagination and combination with his openness to collaboration made the show work on so many levels."

In the years since, Flying Foot Forum has continued to flourish. Chvala's directorial hand for *A Light in the Piazza* and *La Cage aux Folles* has helped elevate Bloomington Civic Theatre as arguably the region's top musical theater. His original musical on war-torn Bosnia in the 1990s, *Heaven*, co-created with contemporary music legend, Chan Poling, was brutally frank. His *A Christmas Carol* stagings are appreciated for their vivid grasp of Dickens' socially stratified London. You get the meat, not just the sugar.

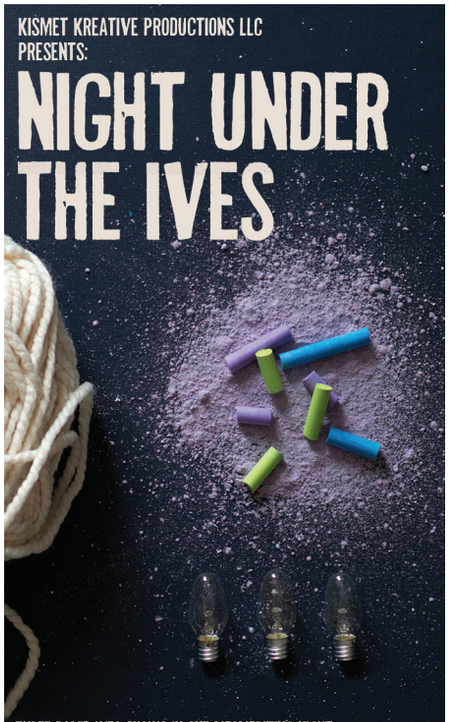
Now in his late 50s and happily single, Chvala is blossoming into new successes. He says, "One of the best things about being gay is the liberating effect of being born different. I realized that for me it made me feel free to make it up as I went along. The combination of that freedom and being single has allowed me to follow my inclinations and to be open to the serendipitous opportunities in my life. My first grade teacher said I daydreamed a lot. I love people but I have always felt a need to spend time alone thinking and daydreaming, so being single works well for me. I think being single also made me develop a lot more significant friends and closer relationships with my family than I would have if I'd had a partner. One of the things I've loved about being gay is that you can make your own life. You can make your own rules."

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WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY BRETT DORRIAN



BECAUSE I'M HAPPY: THE STORY OF LITTLE MISS EMA

Ema is a healthy, happy, vibrant pre-teen girl who wants to become a chemist when she grows up. She loves competitive dance, time with family and friends, and playing with makeup. She and her family live in the Twin Cities. By all appearances, she is a regular kid — who happens to be transgender.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82



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Ema is a competitive dancer in Scottish Highland dance, a style of solo dancing developed in the Scottish Highlands, where it is often performed to the accompaniment of Highland bagpipe music.

Making sure all clients feel comfortable and welcomed is at the forefront of our service commitment. We understand that makeup, styling, and photography can be a very intimate and unfamiliar experience.

I had the pleasure of hosting Ema and her friends at my studio last summer for her 8th birthday party: a girls' day out with age-appropriate makeup and hair makeovers, a mini photo shoot, and a cake her mom picked up from Café Latte. We had a fun time watching the girls sing along to *Frozen* songs and be silly in the studio, having totally uninhibited *fun*. I invited the girls to come back when they're older teens to learn more about everyday makeup.

That afternoon highlighted the mission of my studio: to help clients look and feel their best through services in makeup applications, hairstyling, and photography. This may be in the form of a makeover party, a private personal makeup lesson, a styled portrait session, wedding services, family photos, styled headshots, or any of our other offerings for private clients and media/commercial work.

I met Ema's mother, Martha, several years ago when I styled her for professional headshots. What began as a simple client relationship has evolved as I have become a resource and contact for her daughter, Ema. As Martha noted, "In raising a child who is trans, there is a definite aspect of intentionality. As she's become older, my husband and I have become more deliberate about making sure she has a network of people far beyond her immediate family who support and encourage her."

Making sure all clients feel comfortable and welcomed is at the fore-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 84

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Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Yannick Lebrun and Glenn Allen Sims. Photo © Andrew Eccles.





Though the vintage updo might be a bit too mature for a day-to-day look, Ema recently watched the original *Hairspray* movie for a family movie night. Her intrigue with the '60s styles inspired the dress-up for the young girl.

front of our service commitment. We understand that makeup, styling, and photography can be a very intimate and unfamiliar experience. But we take pride in providing a respectful environment and being expert resources for every client's individual needs.

When asked what she and Ema enjoyed most about their studio visits, Martha said, "Beauty and style are all about feeling confident that your inner, authentic voice is being articulated appropriately, and that you're representing your best self. Ema has an amazing sense of style and such a clear vision of who she is. Coming here has shown her not just style but education and career options."

Many of us are all too familiar with the grim statistics regarding trans lives, especially teens and people of color. We can all do our individual parts to help everyone live authentic, supported lives. I'm proud to be considered part of that support network for Ema and other clients. We know there will likely be more — and bigger —challenges down the road. But we are ready. Ema will have more people who know her and support her now, before there is a crisis, so whatever she meets down the road is more manageable and more successful. And Ema will grow from a young girl into a young woman, equipped with the freedom to explore interests and live life simply in the pursuit of happiness.

Martha reflected, "I was thinking about why we love seeing you and it really has to do with having an opportunity where the fabulous that's on the inside matches the fabulous that's on the outside. Who doesn't love that? And everyone deserves moments like that. And it's not like we let her walk around every day in full hair and makeup. But it's incredibly fun and rewarding for us to spend time together this way."

Giving clients the opportunity to have an authentically wonderful experience to be themselves and have fun is priceless. Our clients look good and feel good, which only boosts their confidence and empowerment. We consider it an honor and a privilege that clients will let us be a part of their personal style journey, to help them represent their best self by celebrating their inner beauty and enhancing their outer beauty. To know that we positively touch peoples' lives with what we do makes our world go around. There is nothing better than making people happy; and that is both our objective and our reward for the work we do for the studio's clients.

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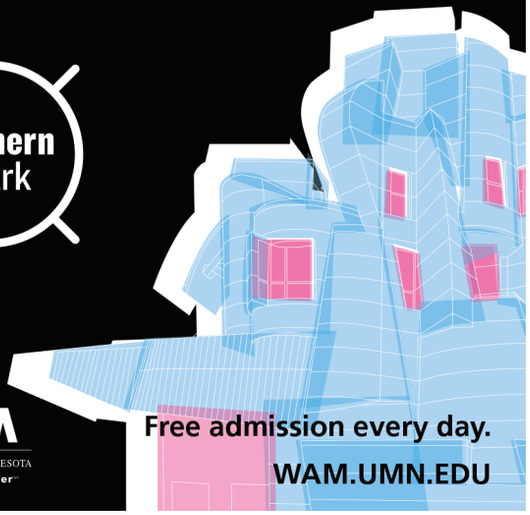


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BY BRANDON MCCRAY

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Doug Melroe

LOOK: PRIDE EVENT

You may recognize Doug Melroe as the face of The Firm, where he has been teaching since 1986. He has also led the warmup for the MN AIDS Walk every year for 28 years. Or you might recognize him as the guy at the end of the Pride parade wearing his pride and not much else.

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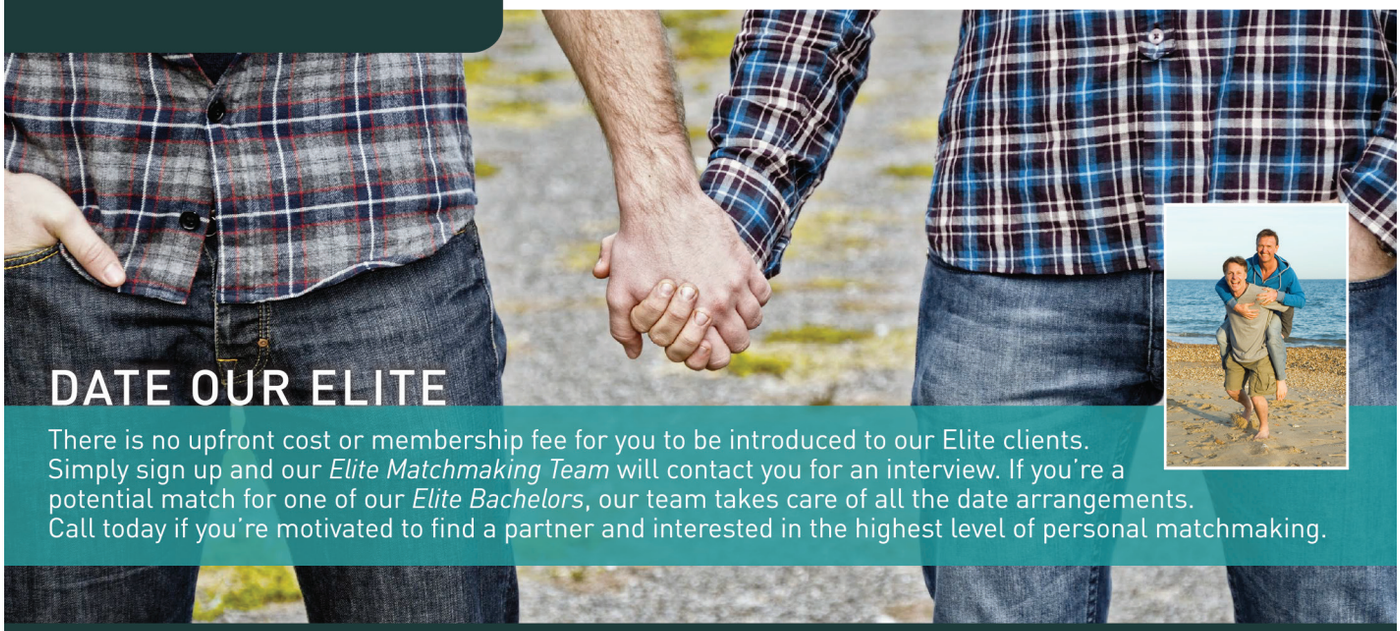
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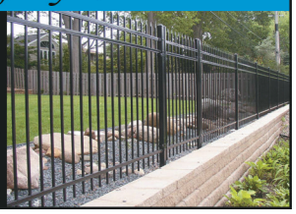
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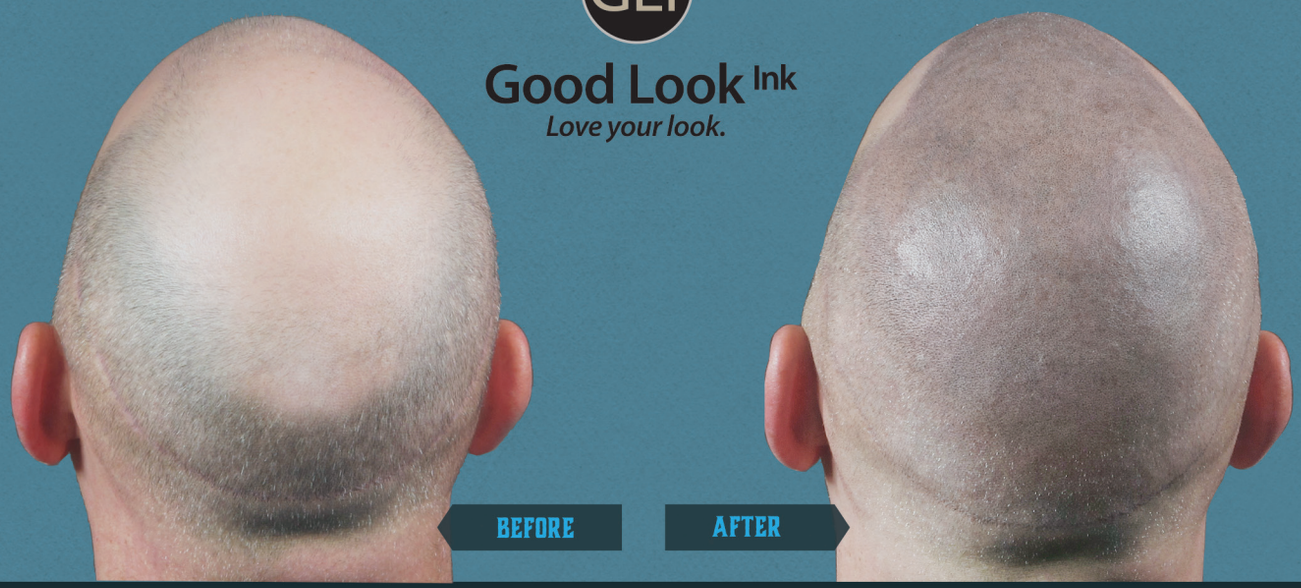
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BY JOHN MARK



LAND OF LIZZO

Lizzo, Sophia Eris, and Quinn Wilson loaded into the rehearsal space around noon, surviving on the adrenaline of an impossibly busy weekend. They had just driven hours from Duluth, having performed late the night before, and we were expected to arrive on-site for the University of Minnesota's Spring Jam in Minneapolis at 3:00. Despite the pressure of the day's tight schedule, Lizzo appeared as relaxed and radiant as ever. As Lizzo shared, this hustle isn't new to her. "I feel like, I always kinda did too much. In high school I had to take every AP class and had to be in every extracurricular activity. My mom always said I tried to bite off more than I could chew. I realized when I got older, in this career, I had been built for it."

It's been a whirlwind of a year for Lizzo, a year that's had her opening tours for Sleater Kinney and Har Mar Superstar, performing on David Letterman, and recording collaborations with Clean Bandit, Bastille, Prince, and 3rdeyegirl. This, in addition to a grip of her own headlining performances, and the ubiquitous success of the "Batches

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Photo by Irv Briscoe

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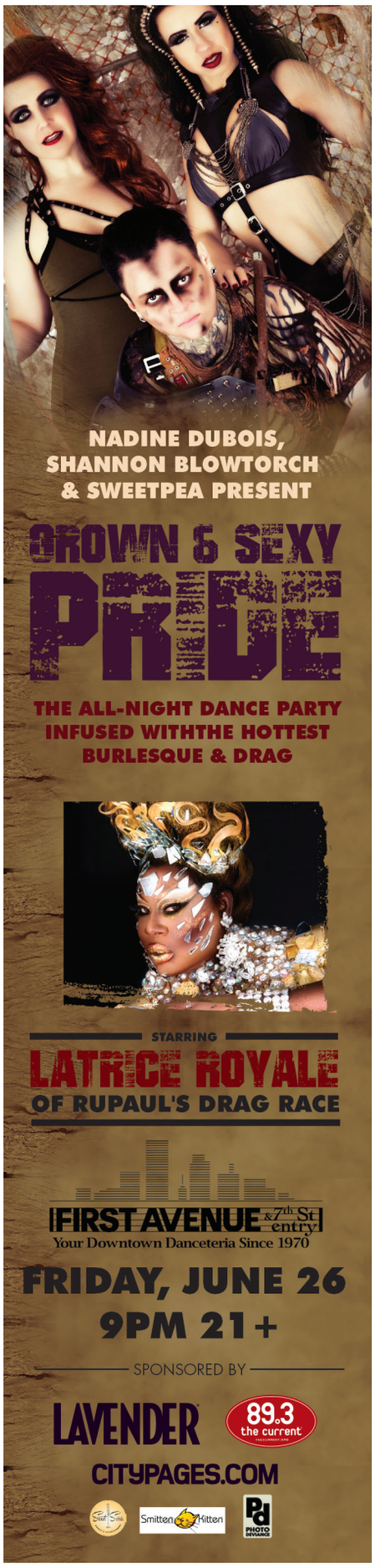
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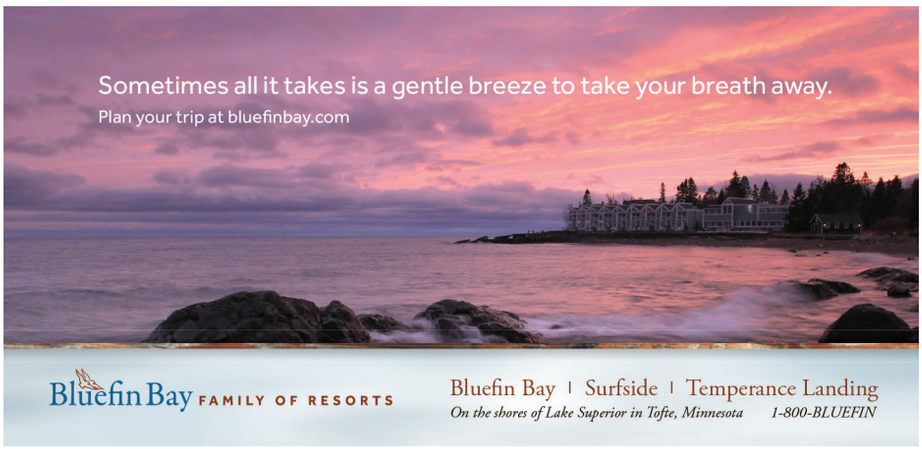
& Cookies" single, has propelled Lizzo into the spotlight. She states, "Batches & Cookies" is one of those artistic phenomena that just reached people. I don't know what I did to make that happen, but I'm glad it did, because I love that song. I think that because we poured so much happiness, love, and energy into the music video…it's a huge part of why people gravitate to the song."

Filmed in 2013 on the cusp of change, the "Batches & Cookies" video shows Lizzo and Sophia Eris dancing through a gay marriage protest on the steps of Capitol Hill. Lizzo has never been one to shy away from political issues and her affinity to the GLBTQ community is apparent in everything from her music videos to the team that she surrounds herself with. In speaking about her musical collaborators, Grrrl Prty bandmate Shannon Blowtorch was one of the first in mind, "Shannon Blowtorch is amazing. We work out together. She gives me the strength to go to the gym, a super positive and helpful human being. She's an active member of the GLBTQ community in Minneapolis and she actually educated me a lot. I was super proud and excited to perform in Pride a couple years ago and I'm super excited to be in town for Pride this year. Now some of my closest friends and some of my strongest collaborators are in the GLBTQ family."

Lizzo's brilliance is indicated not only by her fanbase, but also by the support of her music industry peers. As she put it, "I feel like I've been so blessed to play in front of so many different people's audiences, so many broad audiences." The fact that Lizzo has opened for Sleater Kinney, Chvrches, Marijuana Death Squads, Har Mar Superstar, Pizza Underground, and Clean Bandit, speaks volumes to her camaraderie with artists operating at a high level of excellence. This summer, in addition to a busy festival tour of her own, Lizzo will be opening for Kentucky-based rock band, My Morning Jacket, on a leg of their North American tour. An excited Lizzo shared, "I just remember my manager was like, 'So…Jim James from My Morning Jacket is a big hip-hop fan.' I was excited because I remember seeing Jim James at First Avenue a few years ago. It sounded really rock and really gospel to me, like he was taking us to church a little bit. I like that, and I

CONTINUED ON PAGE 100


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like doing that when I perform live, so I'm super excited to perform in front of their audience."

Lizzo is always quick to credit and appreciate the village of dynamic individuals that have helped shape and grow her artistry, "Grrrl Prty is like a family. We're meeting up tomorrow to make music. It's a great support system. I work with Manchita, Sophia Eris, Quinn, and Shannon Blowtorch. They're all amazing human beings, and they all contribute a lot to the local scene." Grrrl Prty is not even the first of a long legacy of collaborations that have developed Lizzo into the seasoned artist she is today.

It's not easy to consolidate Lizzo's relationship with music into a short history, but an attempt would look something like this: Describing herself as "one-part Detroit, one-part Houston," Lizzo grew up immersed in gospel music. A musical family encouraged her in the pursuit of the flute, in which she achieved great excellence in, getting her a scholarship to the University of Houston. Finding her voice in rock and rap, Lizzo spent her teens and early twenties moving through girl groups like the Cornrow Clique, I.N.I.T.I.A.L.S., The Clerb, and the Chalice, and progressive rock groups like Ellipsis and Lizzo & The Larva Ink. At one point in time, Lizzo could boast involvement with eleven musical acts. These experiences have been undoubtedly formative to Lizzo's sound and given an insatiable bite to her abilities as a performer and a businesswoman. "You know, your voice changes throughout life. My voice has changed again. I'm just always excited to share a new level in my voice." Lizzo is back in the studio and recently incorporated three new songs into her tour set, and having had the privilege to hear a few of the demos off her new album, I can personally advocate that it's some next level work. "The [new] album is about what I had to go through to love myself."

As a journalist, it would lack integrity on my part if I didn't acknowledge my bias on matters related to this genre-defying songstress. As Lizzo's dance choreographer, I work with her, Sophia Eris, and two backup dancers on movement for live concert events. While my position on her team gives me the privilege to see Lizzo up close and personal, her personality and ideologies read the same to me as they would to any of her fans. Lizzo is a truly authentic artist, and just as gracious in real life as she is on stage.

Lizzo appeared a bit nervous as we hid in a small hallway outside a large studio full of students. She was about to give a Q&A talk for the music majors at the performing arts high school in Hopkins. "I'm still learning how to talk with kids," she smiled. The following hour was a home run, predictably so. It didn't take her more than a few seconds to grasp their full attention, a challenge that many high school teachers would envy. Lately Lizzo has been making appearances at more youth-related events, like a Congressional Arts Reception featuring young visual artists and the Q&A with Main Street School of Performing Arts. To say Lizzo is enjoying the opportunity to give back is an understatement: "To feel that I'm accomplished enough to inspire people is one of the best feelings. Knowing that art does not end with creating, it is perpetuated by influence. I never wanted to make music just for me. I always wanted to be inspiring and intriguing to somebody and I think that gives the art more heart. It's not just a vain tool for self expression, it's a piece of yourself that someone can take and grow with."

You can catch Lizzo performing live with My Morning Jacket at Northrop Auditorium on June 27th and at the Eaux Claires Music Festival on July 17th.

Photo by Irv Briscoe



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BY CARLA WALDEMAR



(From left) Photo by Jörg Lutz; Photo by Peter von Felbert; Photo by Photographie Monschau; Photo courtesy of ©Rothenburg Tourismus Service; Photo courtesy of Bayern.by

BRAVO, BAVARIA!

It's Saturday night in Munich, the party-hearty vortex of Germany, and the Hofbräuhaus beer hall is hopping. Camera-clicking tourists focus on the oompah band as strong-bodied waitresses brandish foot-high steins of beer.

Instead, I'm aiming my camera at the band assembled for May Day in a comfy neighborhood — Harras — unvisited by tourists, consuming a sausage from the brat stand and applauding the tuba tooters lined up to parade through the 'hood. C'mon along, they beckon. And I do. Munich, the capitol of Bavaria, is that welcoming.

I end up sharing tables in the local tavern, Meindl Eck, celebrating s*pargel* season with a giant platter of that esteemed white asparagus ("our Viagra"), served with potatoes, hollandaise, and gemütlichkeit.

"Bavaria is the Texas of Germany," declares our guide the next morning: more comfortably off than much of the country, and more conservative. "Law and order!" he bellows as a miscreant crosses an empty street against the light. He's escorting us to Neuschwanstein, the fairytale castle of Mad King Ludwig, who vowed to out-do Versailles but never spent a single night in the mountaintop castle he'd decorated (every last inch of it) with scenes from Wagner's operas. Looks like we might have to, though. The line is long, long, long at this most-visited of all German sites. As a loudspeaker blares "507" — that's our ticket number — our guide reminds us, "Law and order!"

Back in Munich, we admire Nymphenburg, the opulent palace where Ludwig was born, then the showroom for the monarchs of today, BMW (Bavarian Motor Works). Sorry, no gift certificates.

Then I jump on the U-bahn to the Old Town, greatly destroyed by WWII's bombs but restored as built in the Middle Ages. As the Glockenspiel's figures revolve on the tower of the New Town Hall of 1867, a golden statue of the Virgin Mary beams down on her namesake Marienplatz, the city's outdoor living room. I head for the town's oldest church, the Gothic beauty St. Peter's, then on to St. Michael, a Renaissance masterpiece of white and gilt housing Ludwig's tomb, and the nearby Frauenkirche, with its twin onion domes of 1468. The grand finale is the church built by the Asam brothers in 1773 as an eye-rolling, über-the-top homage to Rococo kitsch.

The synagogue is another story — a stone fortress built in 2007 entered through a tunnel inscribed with the names of the city's murdered Jews connecting to the social center, whose glass walls are inscribed with quotes ("I had no idea," etc.). Its neighbor, the Munich Museum, unfolds the chilling account of the Nazi's anti-Semitic crackdown as does the brand-new Documentation Center of the History of the Nazi Party, here in Ground Zero of the movement Hitler ruled: documents and photos of the horror story, "to learn from the darkest chapters of the past."

The nearby Viktualienmarkt is Munich at its most congenial — a panorama of food stalls from which to fabricate an instant picnic. Or dine across the street at Tian, a cosmo vegetarian outpost whose menu includes fennel soup with pumpkin and orange; pasta with carrots, snow peas and Parmesan foam; and a crème brûlée worth hours on the treadmill. To celebrate your inner German, head to the venerable Augustiner-Keller to load up on beer-cellar classics, including cannonball-sized pigs' knuckle with kraut and potato dumpling, schnitzels galore, and duck with red cabbage. Pig out further on a divine dessert called kaiserschmarren (Kaiser's foolishness) composed of crêpes torn up and reassembled with nuts and raisins — divinely inspired folly.

But Texas isn't all about Houston, and Bavaria is more, much more, than Munich. Time to head for the outback: the towns untouched — almost — since Medieval times. The stuff of travel posters, and your dreams.

The Bavarian Alps still sport a spritz of snow. Mittenwald lures us into a morning's hike through the forest to an ice-blue lake, then lunch of ox and spätzle, as compatible as PB&J. We also got a bonus peek into the town's unlikely claim to fame, the Violin Museum. For three centuries and ten generations, Mittenwald's artisans (13 today) have supplied orchestras worldwide with handmade instruments as prized as a Stradivarius. Got $2,000 lying around? Place your order and craftsmen, like Florian in his lederhosen, will follow in the footsteps of fabled Matthias Klotz, whose violin of 1685 is the museum's prize.

Neighboring Garmisch-Partenkirchen celebrates its Olympics ski jumps, along with Garmisch's posh tourist shops and Partenkirchen's cache of 18th-century religious murals brightening every façade. We escape to the posh Hotel Elmoe, hidden in a national forest, for dinner deluxe: salmon tartare, guinea fowl, coconut crème brûlée. It's far from undiscovered, however. On May 22 the G7 held its meeting here.

Bavaria is deeply religious, and so the Church of Wies arising from beyond the beyond enroute to Augsburg is either a mirage or a miracle. We alight to find out. Why this Baroque explosion blooming in the fields? "Is it beautiful? Or, too much?" a guide invokes our thoughts. Then she begins the story. The church was built after a dark hour for Bavaria: the wars, plague,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 104



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and starvation of 1713. A statue of the Scourged Jesus, thought too painful to admire, was banished. But when a devout farm wife came upon it and it wept, miracles began to happen. It now rests behind the altar of the church the peasants built to honor it.

Augsburg is older still, founded by the Romans. But it boasts one of the first social-service projects of the world — the Fuggerai. It's an almshouse community built by wealthy Jakob Fugger, who brought the Italian Renaissance to Germany. His economic success is trumpeted in the town's museum. Tour the Fuggerai's comfy apartments, allotted to pious paupers for 88 cents a year (then and now), which Mozart's grandfather helped build. Tour, also, its bomb shelter that spared thousands during WWII.

Jews paid for and built the city wall, but in 1440 were expelled. Martin Luther didn't fare much better when arguing his case here. Later, native playwright Berthold Brecht opined, "The best thing about Augsburg is the train to Munich."

Think Bavarians are fiercely proud? Ain't seen nothing till you dig deeper into its northern reaches. "We're Franconians first, then Bavarian…and then German," states Johann, a longtime booster of its pinnacle, romantic Rothenburg. Unlike elsewhere we've trekked, this heart-stealing medieval city was largely spared from bombing, thanks to a U.S. military officer who'd heard tell of its unique historic treasures.

I'm off and running to their epicenter, St. Jakob Cathedral, to swoon before the deeply wood-carved Holy Blood altar, created by revered Tilman Riemenschneider in 1520. Add in a magnificently painted High Altar and pungent stained-glass windows, and it doesn't get better than this. The nearby Franconian Church — the city's oldest, from 1285 — showcases the sculpted tombstone likenesses of armored knights and another Riemenschneider altar. The City Museum has gathered more precious artworks: chubby cherubs, an eerie Judas, and the lifesize figures representing the Seven Virtues and Seven Vices (Avarice clutches his purse), and the recreated Jewish ghetto of 1520, including a cache of gravestones from the 1298 pogrom.

Wait, there's more! The Medieval Crime Museum displays painful ways to pay for your misdeeds, and dispels some misconceptions. "Torture," explains Martin, its curator, "was not punishment; it was used only to gain evidence" — as in the rack, the Iron Maiden, and other frightening devices. Public humiliation served as chastisement for lesser missteps, punished by the pillory, neck violins, shame masks, and cheater's chair on display.

Mercifully, we move from the executioner's sword to a wine cellar for a tasting of the Franconia's elegant whites. "Was this a good year?" I innocently inquire. "We only have good years!" responds winemaker Albert Thürauf at Weingut Glocke. "Rather than high alcohol, we prefer flavor. A human can only sleep well above a full wine cellar," he pronounces.

In Würzburg, pride of place goes to the ultra-Rococo Residenz Palace, where Tiepolo was lured from Italy to paint "The Four Continents," representing the New World with an Indian riding a crocodile. He also embellished the elegant White Room, festooned with plaster lace.

Leap ahead half a millennium to Würzburg's Museum im Kulturspricher, showcasing Concrete Art. No, not the lawn gnomes I'd expected, rather, concrete as in the Abstract movement: geometric paintings from 23 European countries, explains guide Rudi Held, of its heyday in the '20s and, later, '50s. All that concrete left us just enough time for one last spargelfest at Restaurant Backöfele: in soup, on salads, paired with brats, schnitzel, bathed in red wine sauce, what have you.

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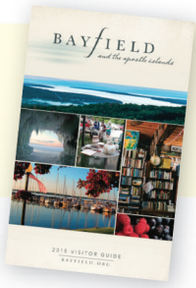


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One of the most popular annual Pride events is always the Pride Boat Cruise. For the third year in a row, the Imperial Court of Minnesota (ICOM) is sponsoring the Pride Boat Cruise on June 21, exactly a week before the Pride parade and festival, aboard the *Minneapolis Queen* paddleboat of Paradise Charter Cruises.

The Pride Boat Cruise departs at 5 p.m. from Bohemian Flats, 2200 West River Parkway, Minneapolis — just north of the University of Minnesota West Bank and the Washington Avenue Bridge. Boarding takes place 15 minutes prior to departure. Entertainment on board is karaoke.

The Saloon bar, 830 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, is hosting a pre-party on June 21, starting at 3 p.m. It features drink specials, and the kitchen will be open. A bus to the boat leaves the Saloon at 4 p.m., and a second trip will be made if necessary. The bus will also return passengers to the Saloon after the cruise. A post-cruise show takes place at the Saloon, with no cover.

Tickets for the Pride Boat Cruise are $25 in advance. Purchase them online at www.impcourtmn.com/events. Tickets will also be on sale at the dock from 4 p.m. to the departure time on the day of the cruise.

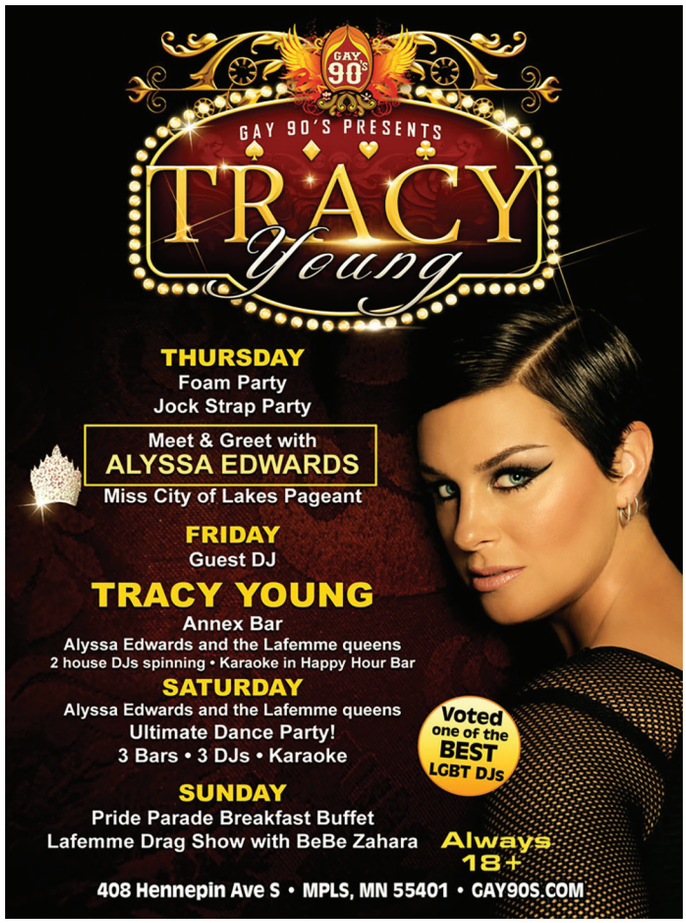
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www.saloonmn.com





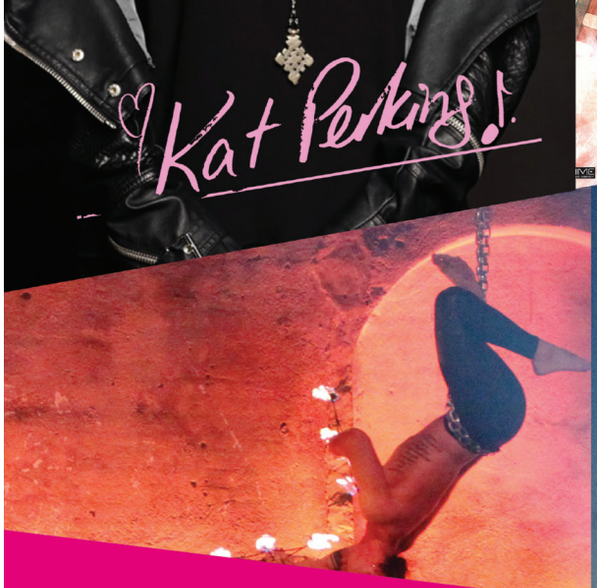
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BY STEVE LENIUS



Carl Gscheidmeier helping to carry the leather pride flag in 2007. Photo by Andrew Bertke

Leather Life

AMERICAN LEATHER STORY: MINNESOTA'S GIANT RAINBOW AND LEATHER PRIDE FLAGS

Minnesota's giant rainbow and leather pride flags have been part of the annual Twin Cities GLBT Pride Parade (now called the Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade) since the original giant flags first made their appearance in the parade in 1998.

Since that time, these giant flags have been a part of the parades because of two gay leathermen, Colin Spriestersbach and Carl Gscheidmeier (also known as "Miss Allison Brooks," the legendary drag queen). At the time, both Spriestersbach and Gscheidmeier were members of the Black Guard of Minneapolis, and Spriestersbach was on the Pride board.

In keeping with this year's Minnesota Leather Pride theme of "American Leather Story," here is the story of the creation of the original giant flags, as told by Gscheidmeier:

CONTINUED ON PAGE 112

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BEST PLACES TO WORK
2015 for LGBT Equality
100% CORPORATE EQUALITY INDEX

It all started one day, sitting at the Brass Rail with Colin having cocktails, when the topic came up of having a flag made to begin the parade. Colin knew that I did sewing for the Black Guard shows and for Allison, so he asked if I would be interested in making the flag. I said sure. His thought was to have someone like Adam (who was then the bouncer at the Gay 90's) carry it. He wanted a large rainbow flag and someone to carry it who was strong enough to handle it in case of strong winds.

Being the type of person that I am, I like doing things in a grand fashion. I then said, "Why not make it something worth talking about? If New York City can have big things like the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade with all those balloons, let Minneapolis come up with something bigger and better. I'll make a rainbow flag representing the gay community, and a leather flag representing our leather community." Colin thought that was a great idea.

That was when I really got excited and said, "I'll go all the way and make the flags curb-to-curb and a block long." Colin's eyes just about exploded. I said, "If you get the materials, I'll make them." We both said that would be really grand and put Minneapolis on the map.

At the time, New York had a rainbow flag but it wasn't sewed together. They just had rows of material loose. Mine was all one piece of material. As for the leather flag, to my knowledge there were none bigger." Both flags measured approximately 50 feet wide and 75 feet long.

A few days later, Colin picked up bolts of fabric of each color and delivered them to my apartment, where I would then spend the next few weeks in the basement sewing them all together, creating the rainbow flag first. It took about 3-1/2 months to sew both flags. Sometimes I thought they would never get done.

The flags were funded by Colin 100 percent. The fabric came from Michael's. I wanted the fabric to be light, bright, and sturdy so it would not rip at the seams.

The sewing machine I used was a home Singer machine. All the seams had to be done two or three times so they would hold together.

The basement where I did the sewing was rather small, about 30 feet by 50 feet. I used a ping pong table with the sewing machine on one side and the material to be sewed by my feet in back of my chair. The material went over my head, into the machine, was pulled across the table and folded on the floor at the other end of the table.

A special thanks should go out to Dan (Colin's partner) for helping figure out the size of the red heart to be put on the leather flag, and to Tom Weiland and Mike Delorme of the Black Guard for helping me a couple of times just pulling the material back and forth over the table.

The flags were done, and now it was Sunday, June 28, 1998 — time for the flags' first appearance in the parade:

At the beginning of the parade route, the flags were folded up in a rectangle. The persons holding the corners of each flag were told to head toward the corners of the intersection (one heading left, the other heading right).

As the flags were opening, they got bigger, and bigger, and bigger, and all I could do was cry with happiness. I was so overwhelmed at the size of these flags, I just couldn't believe it. I was at the front of the rainbow flag between the yellow and green colors, and watched this creation come alive. What I created with my sewing machine was totally a gift of my labor to the community to enjoy.

These original giant flags were part of every year's parade until they were retired and replaced in 2008 (leather flag) and 2009 (rainbow flag). Every time you see the current giant flags, remember that they are in the parade because of the inspiration and actions of two gay leathermen, and the flags' continuing presence in the parade is also a testament to the Black Guard of Minneapolis.







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OUR FITNESS → BY KATHLEEN BRADBURY



Photos courtesy of Above the Falls Sports

THE VIEW FROM THE RIVER: ABOVE THE FALLS SPORTS KAYAKING TOURS

For many Twin Cities residents, the Mississippi River holds a special place in our image of home. The great Mississippi serves as a backdrop for marriage proposals and family photos on the Stone Arch Bridge. It provides a sense of tranquility enjoyed by people who want to escape into a little bit of nature right outside their doorstep. Runners and bikers who chase the current from the many walkways along the river's banks feel its energy.

But how many of the people who pass over the river on their daily commute, who run along its banks or toast its view from the cantilever at the Guthrie, have actually been *on* the river? Unfortunately, the amount of people who have explored the Mississippi River via the river itself is very few. Fearful of its swift current or the presumed dirty water, most people spend their whole time in the Twin Cities without ever getting on the powerful waterway.

Bob Schmitz, owner of Above the Falls Sports, wants to change that. As

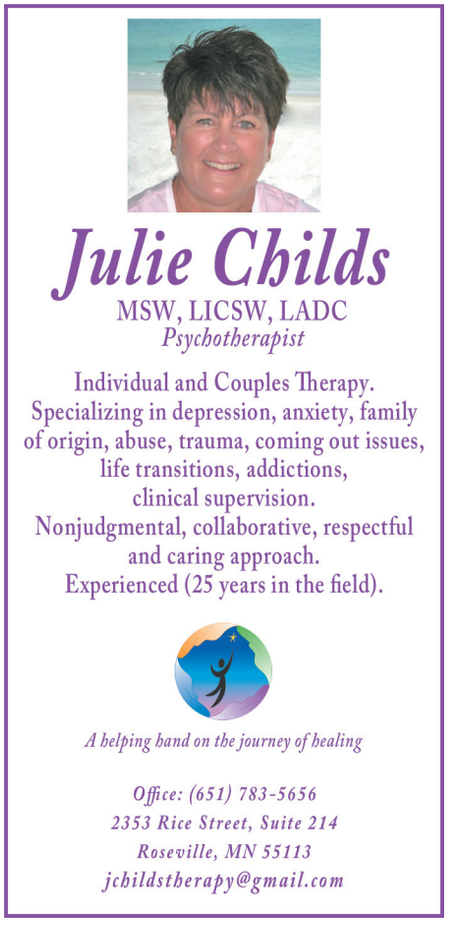
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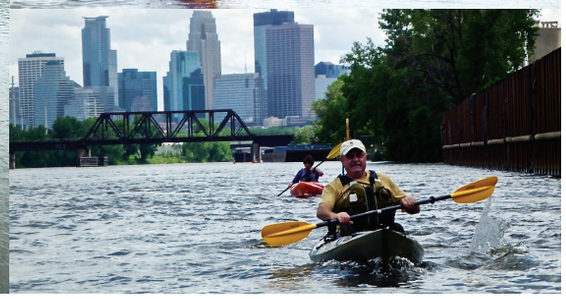

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an avid paddler and rower, Schmitz began exploring the Mississippi River when he moved to downtown Minneapolis in 2003. Between 2003 – 2009, Schmitz doesn't recall ever seeing another paddler on the river during his frequent trips up and down the Mississippi. He adds, "I had the river to myself, and I was always amazed at how little use that river gets…so I decided to try to make a little business out of it and introduce people to the river."

In 2009, Schmitz opened Above the Falls Sports, which has developed into a bustling business that operates multiple kayaking trips per day. With a mission to promote recreational activity in the Mississippi River Valley, Schmitz and his crew of knowledgeable guides help paddlers experience the history and aesthetic beauty of the cities from a truly unique perspective. With a variety of tours and private lessons available, Above the Falls Sports encourages people to experience the city from the mighty Mississippi and exposes people to the joys of water recreation.

Above the Falls Sports offers a variety of kayaking trips, all of which allow paddlers to see the Twin Cities area from a new and distinctive angle. The Working the Channel tour is the "premier urban kayaking experience that explores the industrial heritage of Minneapolis from the perspective of the river that made Minneapolis life possible." During the 2.5-hour tour, paddlers explore the river area between St. Anthony Falls and the Broadway Avenue Bridge, where guides discuss some of the industrial history of Minneapolis and draw attention to iconic landmarks such as Nicollet Island, Boom Island, and the Grain Belt Brewery.

For adventurers who want to see more of the river, the four-hour trip from Downtown Minneapolis to Minnehaha Falls is a truly unique experience. Though June 9 saw the last trips through the Upper St. Anthony Lock which is now permanently closed, adventurers will continue to have access to Lower St. Anthony Lock and Lock & Dam #1. At the suggestion of Schmitz, who was "trying to get as many people as possible" through the trip before the upper lock closed, my wife and I took advantage of that limited edition tour over Memorial Day weekend. As long-term residents of Minneapolis, we were awe-struck as we saw the Downtown skyline from the river and paddled through the only gorge on the Mississippi River.

The highlight of this trip is definitely traveling through the locks, a unique experience that allows paddlers to participate in Minneapolis history hands-on. (One guide joked that it was like being in a big bathtub while the water gets drained, only this time, we're the rubber ducks.) While the locks drain, the guides give historical background into how the Mississippi River aided in the industrial development of the Twin Cities. Schmitz adds that he hopes this trip encourages people to "be aware of the river system and how it has impacted the economy and our market system."

After a quick stop at Bohemian Flats, our guides led us down the river, pointing out eagles, ducklings, and other wildlife. We ended at Minnehaha Falls, where we enjoyed a quick hike up to Sea Salt for a much-needed lunch after our time on the river. Even to Twin Cities residents like us, the trip is a special way to appreciate the beauty of Minneapolis, seen from a completely different viewpoint.

Paddlers who want to spend the whole day on the river are encouraged to participate in the Minneapolis to St. Paul trip. With stops at Minnehaha Creek, the Fort Snelling Interpretive Center, and the Depot in St. Paul, the trip connects the Twin Cities and allows paddlers to experience the rich history of the Mississippi River.

Another trip from the Coon Rapids Dam to downtown Minneapolis provides an opportunity for nature lovers and birdwatchers to paddle past the Great Blue Heron Rookery. The tour also travels through forested parkland, past Minneapolis Water Works, and former industrial sites, creating a blend of natural environment and industrial progress that reflects the development of the Twin Cities area.

No matter what tour you choose, when you go out on the river with Above the Falls Sports, you'll be assured that safety is the top priority. The Mississippi River has a reputation for being a dangerous waterway, but Schmitz believes the public tends to have an exaggerated misconception of the river's power. He explains that although the undercurrent of the Mississippi can be strong, the current on the surface of the river is relatively slow, making it possible for kayaks to safely glide down the banks of the river.

Even though the river is much safer than most people expect, Schmitz and his guides take every precaution to ensure the safety of their patrons. Personal flotation devices are mandatory, and the guides discuss how to avoid potential hazards and obstacles on the river. Additionally, all tours begin with a brief practice session in a calm portion of the river to ensure that paddlers are comfortable with — and can perform — fundamental strokes. While paddling down the river, the tours stay close to the shoreline, where the water is more shallow and calm. The guides are also trained to respond to a variety of situations and assuredly instruct paddlers how to navigate areas of choppy water, allowing people to explore their adventurous sides in a safe and controlled manner.

As an increasingly popular sport in the United States, kayaking is a great way to experience the water because you don't have to be extremely physically fit to paddle. Schmitz believes kayaking is an "easy way to get in a boat and an easy way to use it because you don't have to know a lot of strokes or techniques." Paddling a kayak simply requires continual strokes with equal pressure on each side. The ease of maneuvering a kayak allows people to get out on the water quickly, making the river much more accessible than by other watercrafts.

There are many health benefits to kayaking — another reason why people should take advantage of water recreation. Kayaking provides a great core and upper body workout, with each paddling motion engaging the arms, the abdominals, and the lower back. By controlling their pace and the power behind each stroke, paddlers can push themselves for an intense workout, or simply enjoy a leisurely paddle. Regardless of whether someone's paddling for exercise or pleasure, kayaking provides an opportunity to connect with the environment and appreciate the beauty that Minnesota has to offer. Through kayaking the Mississippi River, visitors and Twin Cities residents alike can experience our great cities from a unique and memorable perspective.

Above the Falls Sports invites people to experience the river through their standard or private tours or through kayaking lessons. To book your tour or get more information, visit www.abovethefallssports.com.

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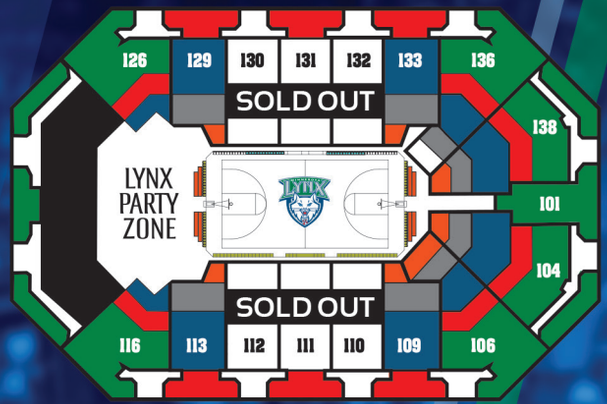
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BY ELLEN KRUG

LEADING BY EXAMPLE IN SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA

"I would like to see the group get so big that it would have to split into two."

Voicing that aspiration was Emily Christie, a 30-year-old transwoman who lives in Stewartville, a town of nearly 6,000 located just south of Rochester. Christie was talking about a transgender and gender non-conforming support group that she and Kayla Goetzman, a native of Rochester, founded in the fall of 2013.

The group, officially named the "Southeastern Minnesota Transgender Support Group" (SEMT), has 20 to 30 members who identify as transgender (male-to-female or female-to-male), intersex, genderqueer, or questioning. SEMT meets biweekly for 90 minutes at a Rochester area church and regularly draws eight to ten people per session; at times, as many as 25 persons have attended. The meetings consist of each attendee "checking-in" and reporting on challenges or successes relative to their respective "gender journeys." Group members, facilitated by Christie and Goetzman, offer feedback and support. When necessary, group members are referred to area therapists for professional guidance.

The meetings attract many who are just beginning to deal with their gender dysphoria (the disconnect between brain and body) and really lack information about where to turn. According to Goetzman, "A lot of people at our meetings don't even know what their female names will be." She related that a common situation is the first-time attendee who will state, "I've been married 11 years and just told my wife (about being transgender) and she's flipping out. What do I do?"

Demographically, SEMT members are a real cross section, ranging in age from 18 to mid-60s. Careers include "a doctor, a janitor, and a computer programmer," said Christie. The group draws attendees from southeastern Minnesota, northern Iowa, and, occasionally, Wisconsin.

As one might expect in greater Minnesota, visibility as a trans person (or as anyone else on the GLBT alphabet) isn't something that comes easily. (See this issue's "Skirting the Issues" for more on how GLBT people are either largely invisible or marginalized in areas beyond the Twin Cities.) In fact, as Christie related, "Three-fourths of our members aren't out" publicly.



Emily Christie. Photo by Bridget Hoffman



Kayla Goetzman. Photo courtesy of Kayla Goetzman

However, that's not the case with Christie and Goetzman, who are very visible in their southeastern Minnesota communities. The two met by pure coincidence during a meeting at the University of Minnesota's Program in Human Sexuality in 2010; from that, a friendship and collaboration ensued.

Christie came out as female during the long July Fourth weekend in 2013. While that alone is enough to merit a gold star for courage (as well as honorable mention for symbolism since her birthday as a woman coincides with that of our nation), the really amazing feat was that Christie came out in small town Minnesota while part owner of an independent insurance agency.

Christie readily concedes that she's had some ensuing bumps, which included losing twenty percent of her insurance agency's business as a consequence of announcing her womanhood. (Fortunately, business has since returned to normal.) Yet, Christie is "constantly surprised" by how clients react to her relatively new status as female. She explained, "Some people whom I thought would leave (her agency) actually stayed. On the other hand, people who promised they'd stay, left." Additionally, Christie has encountered some stigmatization by professional colleagues. As she put it, "Some (colleagues) I used to talk to won't even look at me anymore."

None of this seems to have deterred Christie in her quest to help trans people (as that phrase is broadly defined here to include all gender non-conforming persons) who hail from parts other than the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metro area. "I'm trying to make this place a little better so it's more like up there," Christie said, in comparing greater Rochester to the much more inclusive Twin Cities.

That Christie is helping to blaze a big trail for trans people in southeastern Minnesota is also evident by her personal story — she's married to her high school sweetheart. Together, they parent two daughters; a five-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 120

David Shannon, LICSW
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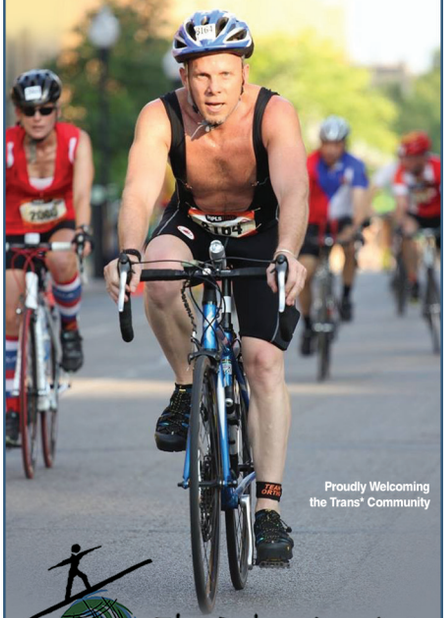
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CHRISTIE AND GOETZMAN HAVE TAKEN A ROLE IN HELPING MAYO EDUCATE FIRST-, SECOND-, AND THIRD-YEAR RESIDENTS ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE TRANSGENDER.

year-old and a newborn. Their oldest daughter takes Christie's transgender status in stride. "Absolutely my daughter is accepting," Christie reported. To her daughter, Christie's either "Mommy" or "Maddy."

Goetzman, the co-founder of SEMT, is 52 and describes herself as "intersex/transgender." Within recent years, her doctor confirmed that she has Klinefelter syndrome, a genetic condition that involves an extra female (the "x") chromosome, giving her an XXY chromosomal identity. Physically, Goetzman has always presented with smaller hands and other female features, but grew up in the 1970s as a boy. Because of her physical size, Goetzman was shy and picked on. (Note: statistically, most males born with Klinefelter syndrome don't have an attendant gender identity issue; instead, I mention this because it underlines Goetzman's story about self-acceptance and her motivation in wanting to help others who have been marginalized.)

As an adult, Goetzman married a woman, but eventually realized that she needed to transition genders. Goetzman explained, "I got to 47, and lo and behold, Kayla wanted to come out." Unfortunately, Goetzman's wife wasn't as accepting as Christie's spouse. "She's fine being around me (as a woman)," Goetzman related, "but she doesn't want to be married to me." Goetzman and her wife divorced earlier this year.

Goetzman went public as Kayla in April 2013. She's long worked in building maintenance for a large private luxury townhouse and apartment company. Her supervisors were supportive of her transition and the tenants that Goetzman regularly works with have been accepting, too. She said, "Many thought that Kurt (Goetzman's male name) went away and Kayla took over."

Catholic nuns live in one of the properties that Goetzman maintains. "The nuns were perfect," said Goetzman. "They've treated me wonderful." One of the Sisters has even been helping Goetzman with voice lessons.

A takeaway from Christie and Goetzman's personal stories is that many cisgender (non-transgender) people in greater Minnesota can be accepting if given the opportunity to interact with an out trans person. Yes, there are some challenges, but both women are showing that with the courage to come out, there also are huge rewards.

A number of other community resources exist to help trans persons live authentically in the Rochester area. For example, the pastor of the church where SEMT meets (I was asked not to disclose the church's identity because the group leaders don't want to inadvertently out a group member) is openly lesbian and fully supportive of SEMT's mission and work. In fact, the pastor recently approached Christie and Goetzman to speak at a meeting of the Rochester Area Interfaith Leaders that is set for this fall in Rochester. Goetzman readily acknowledged the significance of clergy as active allies. She offered, "A lot of churches in Rochester, if you say you're trans, you're booted out the door."

On the medical side, there's also significant community support for transgender people. In January of this year, Mayo Clinic launched the pilot phase of its Transgender and Intersex Specialty Care Clinic. The clinic is housed within the division of Endocrinology under the medical direction of Todd Nippoldt, M.D. According to Cyndi Smith, MHSA, an Administrative Fellow working for Mayo to help get the project off the ground, "The clinic currently offers initiation, monitoring, and maintenance of hormonal supplements, psychiatry and psychology support, and limited referrals for surgical transition."

Smith explained that once the clinic's pilot phase is completed and evaluated at the end of 2015, the plan is to have the surgical specialties more uniformly integrated with the clinic. The goal is to "offer a seamless transition process for those at any phase from questioning their gender identity through hormonal and/or surgical gender confirmation," said Smith. Actual reassignment surgeries are still off into the future while Mayo surgeons train on various techniques.

Thus far, with only word-of-mouth marketing (Mayo's transgender clinic doesn't even have a website yet) the majority of clinic patients have been local to the Rochester area, with a few patients from other states. Assuming the clinic's pilot phase moves to an actual program, Mayo will then work to make the transgender clinic into a "global program."

Also in the works at the Mayo, according to Smith, is development of pediatric protocols (including use of hormonal "puberty blockers") to allow gender questioning children the time to delay puberty and mature into their "true" gender at a later date. There's no question this resource is much needed outside the Twin Cities; many outstate families with gender nonconforming children are struggling to determine the best course for dealing with a myriad of challenges.

Mayo also has therapists to counsel patients on the options available to them through reproductive endocrinology or fertility so they can make informed choices about their families. Patients and families who receive primary care through Mayo Clinic also have access to integrated behavioral health counseling to support them and their family members before, during, and after transitioning genders.

Christie and Goetzman have taken a role in helping Mayo educate first-, second-, and third-year residents about what it means to be transgender. "We feel our job is to help people as much as possible," said Goetzman.

In the end, "help" really is what SEMT is all about. The statistics about transgender people experiencing depression, which leads to suicide attempts and successes, are all too real. (One estimate is that 40 percent of all transgender people attempt suicide; trans persons also have the highest incidence of substance abuse, homelessness, and joblessness of any letter in the GLBT alphabet.)

SEMT, led by Christie and Goetzman, and supported by many cisgender community members, offers trans persons real help. Certainly, it's not easy to come out as transgender in the best of circumstances — where resources are aplenty and the community is welcoming. Take that a few notches back to an area like southeast Minnesota and one can understand how Christie and Goetzman's outreach really is about saving lives. Indeed, the number of people that SEMT attracts attests to it being a much needed resource.

With Laverne Cox, Janet Mock, Chaz Bono, and now Caitlyn Jenner as visible and vocal transgender role models and activists, it's clear where society as a whole is headed — to a place of real acceptance and inclusion. SEMT is actively helping push that process forward in greater Minnesota.

As Christie summarized, "I hope in twenty years that we won't need it (SEMT)." Comparing how gays and lesbians have generally become accepted by society, Christie added, "My dream is that it happens for transgender people, too."

With the kind of leadership that Christie and Goetzman are providing, I'm confident that this aspiration will come true much sooner than later. They are to be applauded for their brave community-building work.

For more information about the Southeastern Minnesota Transgender Support Group (SEMT), go to www.semt.info.

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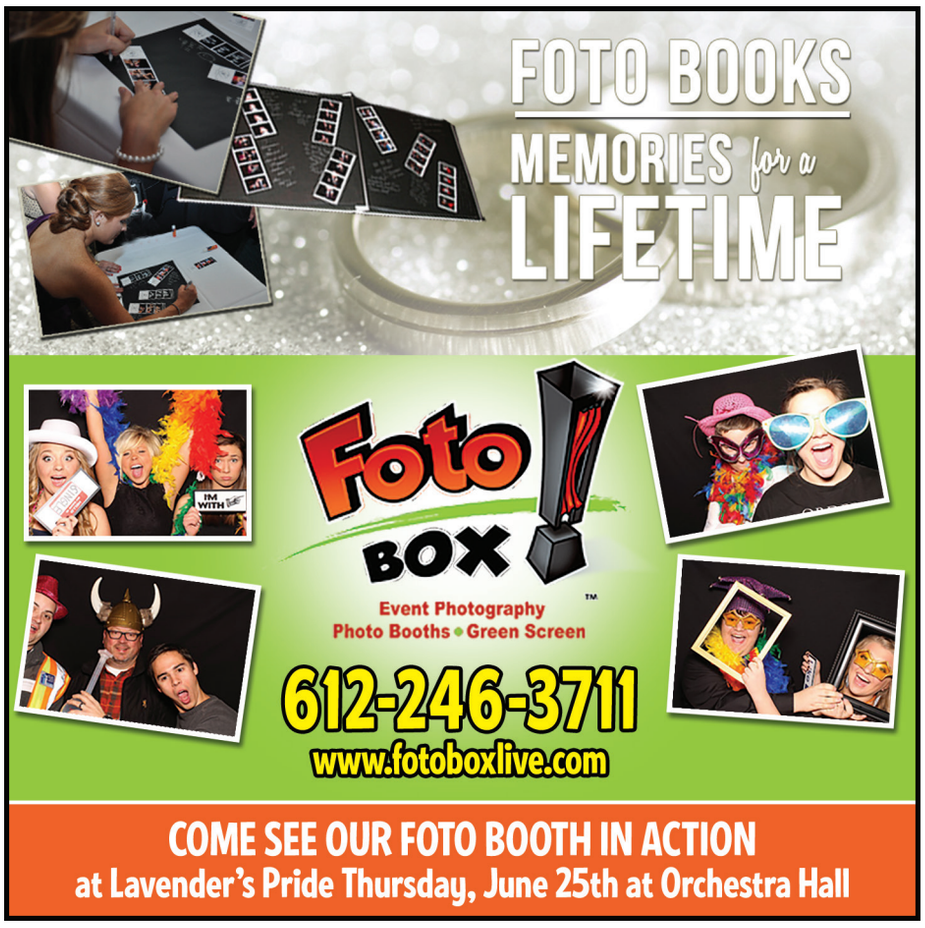
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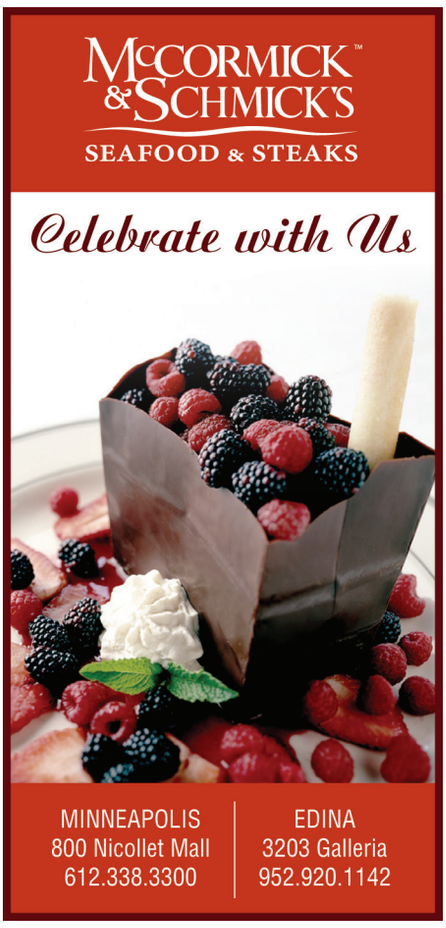


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BY JENNIFER AULWES



Planned Parenthood in the 2014 Pride Parade.
Photo courtesy of Planned Parenthood



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1 IN 2 SEXUALLY ACTIVE YOUNG PEOPLE WILL GET AN STD BY THE AGE 25 - AND MOST WON'T KNOW IT

Great cheekbones, solid abs, bedroom eyes…chlamydia-free?

Right, no one ever mentions that on their dating profile. And that might include you, too, because sexually transmitted disease (STD) rates are up in Minnesota. Again.

Chlamydia, in particular, has reached epidemic proportions over the last decade. It's the number one reported infectious disease in Minnesota and reached a new high of 19,897 cases in 2014, up 6 percent from 2013. Rates of gonorrhea, syphilis, and HIV have also risen steadily over the last ten years. This is a growing problem for every state in the nation, including Minnesota, and it's not an urban or rural problem. STDs are equal opportunity when it comes to geography; they affect the Twin Cities, greater Minnesota, and the suburbs at equal rates.

What's your status? Finding out has never been easier: pee in a cup, swab your cheek, get quick results and you're on your way.

Everyone deserves a great sex life that's healthy and fun. But, getting tested has to be a part of your basic preventive health care **because one in every two sexually active young people in this country will have an STD by the time they are 25 — and most won't know it.** This is especially important for the GLBT community, because added to the (unnecessary) stigma that people associate with STD testing, GLBT individuals face additional barriers to accessing health care, including sexual health care.

Not OK. Untreated STDs can have serious health complications. For women, chlamydia can lead to pelvic pain and infertility. For men, untreated chlamydia can cause chronic infections in the prostate and rectum and can lead to sterility. Also, chlamydia makes it easier for men to both get HIV and give HIV. Many STDs cause no symptoms and the only way to know for sure is to get tested.

There are clinics across Minnesota that offer low- to no-cost testing, including one you might not have thought of. Planned Parenthood. Here's a little secret: we're not just for birth control. We provide more than 100,000 STD tests every year. The Human Rights Campaign called us a "Leader in LGBT Healthcare Equality" and — get this — we offer STD testing in clinics *and* online.

If you live in Minnesota, you can talk to a Planned Parenthood provider through a secure video consultation system, and then receive an STD test kit (and treatment if necessary) in the mail. It doesn't get any more discreet than that. Most patients use the app (Planned Parenthood Care), but you can also get to them online at www.plannedparenthoodcare.org. You can also be tested at any Planned Parenthood clinic, usually for little to no cost. You can find clinic locations at www.GYTNOW.org or www.PPMNS.org.

Alongside regular testing, prevention is incredibly important. Use condoms every time. When it comes to HIV, using a condom makes sex 10,000 times safer than not using a condom. (Seriously.) They're the best protection you have against STDs.

So, prevent STDs with regular and consistent condom use and make sure to get tested any time you change partners or have unprotected sex. Don't become a part of the growing epidemic of STDs in our state.

Take PRIDE this month — in your health, your future, your life. Get tested.

Jennifer Aulwes is the Communications Director for Planned Parenthood Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota. For more information, go to www.ppmns.org or www.plannedparenthoodcare.org.





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OUR PETS

BY SHANE LUECK



Photo courtesy of Julie Kearns

"RUFF" DAYS BE GONE: ADOPTING SENIOR DOGS

Let's face it: as a community, we love our dogs. But the harsh reality is that senior dogs get a bad rap. Which canines are the first to get adopted? Puppies: the younger pooches with the big eyes, tiny legs, and paws and ears that are too big and require growing into. Science has tried to explain this cute effect: when traits associated with babies (and baby animals) are seen, it activates a part of the human brain that gives feelings of anticipation, excitement or the urge to cuddle or hold an object — it's known as baby schema. Look it up.

But Mary Rollie, the visionary behind Vintage Dog Day, questions why senior dogs can't be just as adoptable. Vintage Dog Day serves as a celebration of senior dogs and an opportunity for rescue organizations to get exposure for some of their older fosters.

"These dogs usually show a little gray in their muzzle or maybe a little hitch in their get-along," Rollie says. "But what most people don't see is a dog that already 'gets it'. Housebroken? Check. Basic commands? Check."

Rollie is a resident of Minneapolis's Longfellow neighborhood, and she noticed vintage shops popping up every few blocks over the past three (or so) years. Now, the Minnehaha Avenue stretch is home to no fewer than eight vintage stores specializing in all things repurposed and/or second-hand. Her curiosity got the best of her and Rollie ended up walking into every shop; she quickly learned that each shop owner she spoke with had such an appreciation of the value of second hand, usually unnecessarily discarded, dog-eared but broken-in items that people trade off all too eagerly for the shiny, new stuff.

"They all had such a passion for the classics, I totally related with my passion of rescue dogs…especially the senior rescue dogs," Rollie says. "I've volunteered with enough rescues to know that the older dogs get overlooked."

So this self-described "rescue-dog-loving-kinda-nosy-neighbor" got to thinking. What better place to showcase available rescue senior dogs than a vintage shop? The idea sparked when Rollie met Julie Kearns, the owner of Junket: Tossed and Found, and her dog Nellie (a senior rescue dog herself).

"Nellie was a great fit for the shop and the corollary between an older dog with lots of love to give, and previously loved, older vintage goods with lots of character and quality, was one that stood out for me," Kearns says. "I had dreams of hosting senior rescue dogs at the shop; Mary took it and made it an event that included all of the shops."

Rollie adds, "So now I've met Julie, and of course Nellie, and Ella from E's Emporium who loves the bully breeds, and Toni from Turquoise Vintage who grew up with boxers (my true love breed), and JoJo of Plum Crabby who is also a dog lover along with the rest of the Minnehaha Mile [shop owners]. And suddenly, the shops are generously fostering, hosting, and donating space and energy to some eager metro rescues! And all are benefitting from some amazing exposure!"

It began with a Facebook event page for the inaugural event in September 2014, complete with the participating shops and rescues, not to mention some great photos and bios of attending dogs. Rollie was able to pull in rescues with only three weeks notice — a sign that Rollie calls the event a success. In fact, it was such a success that Rollie, Kearns, and the other shop owners are gearing up for round two on July 18.

Each shop pairs up with a rescue organization, and the rescue brings an older dog(s) to meet and greet at each shop. Here is where things get even more fun — adoptions are encouraged!

Rollie says, "I'm just so pleased that the shops want to once again host some local rescues and get much needed exposure for the vintage dogs!"

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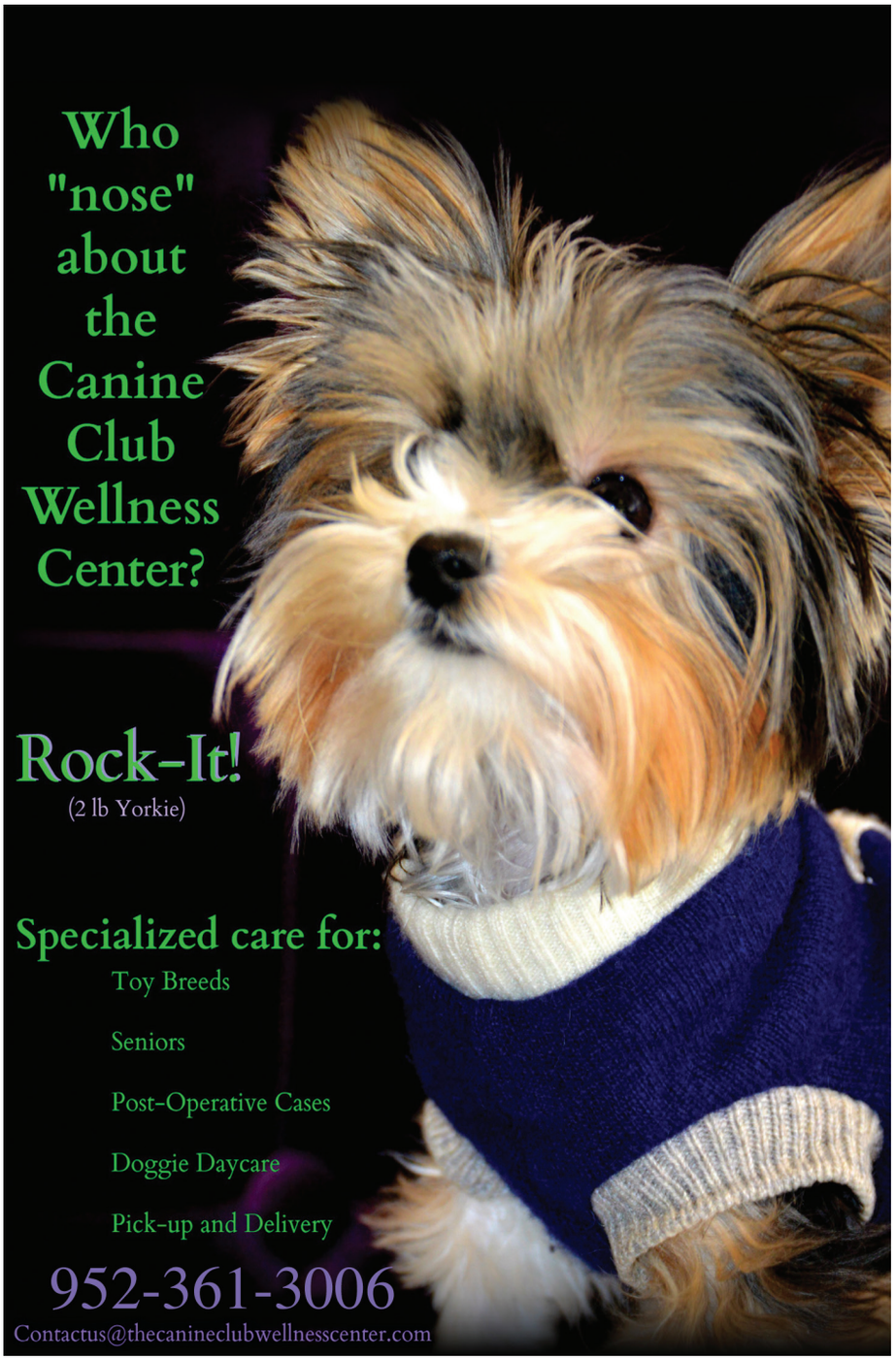
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OUR PETS

BY SHANE LUECK



Photo by Nell Gelhaus

ARMANI CHOSE ME: A RESCUE STORY

Three months ago a rescue dog adopted me. Armani (as he came to be called within minutes of meeting him) is a quiet and cuddly shih tzu and poodle mix who was rescued from a hoarding situation in Kentucky by Minneapolis' Safe Hands Rescue. When I first met him, he was being fostered by *Lavender*'s own Nell Gelhaus and her wife, and it was love at first big-brown-eyed sight.

It was Grammys night and Nell and I never miss an awards show, so I grabbed some snacks and went over for a viewing party. To my surprise, young Armani was in their care. Armani was *tiny* (this was a seven-month-old shih-poo we're talking about here) and practically hairless. You see, when he was rescued he suffered from terrible mange and had nearly all of his hair shaved off. But that didn't stop him from immediately abandoning his foster parents to sit on my lap and cuddle nearly the rest of my night's visit.

From that moment, I was smitten. I couldn't get him out of my mind and every time I saw him while he was being treated before he was eligible for adoption he would immediately jump in my arms. Yes, Armani adopted me; not the other way around.

As a gay man with no inclination for children, I had always been drawn

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to dogs, and as a single man getting ready to graduate with his master's degree, I was at a stage in my life where I was ready to do something with impact, move out of my comfort zone, and be responsible for another creature besides myself for once.

Adopting a homeless pet was the solution for me, and almost instantly upon meeting Armani, my life began to take on a new shape. It gave me a sense of being needed, a knowledge that something outside myself depended on me solely for its happiness and basic survival. In many ways it was my first step into adulthood. Armani has an affinity for Barbra Streisand (he'll stop whatever he's doing and stare at the TV if you start playing her movies), avoiding puddles, and shopping. A perfect match, right?

My world opened up in ways I could never have imagined once Armani was at my side. People whom I had never spoken to came up to me to ask about him. In fact, I had passed many of these same people countless times on the street without even a "hello". Living in Minneapolis, Armani and I have met many gay and lesbian dog owners, particularly rescue-dog owners, and I was welcomed to a wonderful network of information and support from other people who shared the honor of raising these deserving creatures. The pet supplies store is quickly becoming my social circle and it's clear that Armani doesn't mind that fact. After all, he gets a play date out of the deal.

Since adopting Armani, I've started to think about the relationship between the gay community and rescue animals and what I perceive to be a special bond. For many of us, growing up gay meant growing up with a sense of "otherness", a sense that we didn't fit in. We learned that somehow there was not a place at the table for us. I believe that many people in the GLBT community are drawn to adopt a homeless pet because there is a mutual understanding and respect for displacement and "otherness".

Personally, my identity has never been a secret (how can it, when I grew up idolizing the Spice Girls and Destiny's Child), and thankfully I never underwent any of the horrible bullying making headlines today. But that doesn't mean there still weren't any funny looks or whispers in the hallway that have made me more empathic to the "underdogs" of society — and there is no more heroic underdog than the shelter pet.

I recently overheard two gay men talking about one of their mutual crushes, who happened to have a rescue dog. One man said that to him, the fact that this crush had a rescue dog was one of the sexiest things about him. The other guy jokingly said, "Oh, he just wants people to think he is not superficial." Whatever the reason behind this act of kindness and compassion, I encourage my gay brothers and sisters to consider extending their circle of compassion to include homeless animals through adoption, donation, or volunteering.

By some estimates, there are up to 6 million dogs euthanized every year in America's shelters (note: most of Minnesota's shelters are low- or no-kill). While many households are only interested in buying a dog from a breeder or pet store, there are vast numbers of healthy, adoptable dogs languishing in high-risk shelters across the country. Having my own little bundle of joy has given me a great opportunity to speak to people about the urgency and importance of adopting and rescuing a companion animal rather than buying one. Today, as a matter of fact, there are more and more purebred dogs available at shelters as the closing and policing of the puppy mill industry continues to draw more attention.

During my three short months with Armani, he's already changed my life, perhaps most famously by serving as the one of the sole reasons I post to social media anymore (well, him and Beyoncé). Whoever said money can't buy you happiness has never paid an adoption fee. But outside of the public eye, he's forced me to be more active and lose weight, get my life in order (and destress!) after graduation, and become a much more stable human being. It's clear to me that the best things in life… are rescued.





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-Will & Charlie, June 26th 2014

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#GSQUAREDWED: A HAPPY ENDING FOR KEVIN AND RANDY

Most love stories begin with serendipitous circumstances, complete with awkward yet adorable moments, butterflies, and the "once in a lifetime" feeling that makes you feel like you've met your one and only soul mate. But the love story of Randy Goetz and Kevin Grewe begins differently, with a relationship that grew naturally out of feelings of compassion and support during life's difficult times. After both men lost their previous partners, Kevin and Randy realized that it's never too late to start a new life with a new love.

Randy and Kevin both had amazing lives and families. In 1984, Kevin was the first single man in the United States to successfully pursue an international adoption. After starting his family of two, Kevin met Daniel in 1987; the couple would share 13 wonderful years and raise two sons together, Chris and Erik. Randy had been happily married to his wife for 23 years and had raised two beautiful children, Barrett and Courtney. Both men delighted in their families and were proud to be fathers to such wonderful children.

But tragedy struck when Kevin's partner passed away after Chris's high school graduation, and Randy's wife died of a brain tumor. Both men experienced great loss and began the process of living after losing loved ones. For Randy, the five-year period after losing his wife made him realize that "life is way too short and I needed to live an authentic life for myself." Dealing with the loss of his wife and several other family members, Randy realized that he was gay and needed to embrace that part of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 134



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his identity in order to be truly fulfilled in the future.

After years of grief and rebuilding, Randy and Kevin got a second chance at companionship eleven years ago when they connected through Match.com and found comfort and support in each other. Kevin recalls how extensive emails turned into long and personal telephone calls until they decided to "pull the trigger" and meet face-to-face. The couple chose to meet at a local restaurant, and Randy crafted an escape plan in case the meeting didn't go as planned.

When Randy and Kevin met, they were both surprised by how natural and comfortable their meeting was. Kevin adds, "We enjoyed sharing stories with each other, of talking about our kids and in exposing our vulnerable sides when breaching the boundaries of our grief. It was the comfort of someone who felt like a friend." As the men shared their past experiences with each other, they realized they had a strong present and future together.

Kevin and Randy's attributes complement each other well, making them the ultimate dream team — especially when it comes to entertaining guests. While Randy is creative and artistic, with an eye for design, Kevin is an extraordinary cook and keeps their guests satisfied. Randy adds that, thanks to Kevin's cooking skills, "My personal hashtag is #IEatWell!"

On a more personal level, Randy appreciates the balance between their personalities, saying, "He is a feeler, and I am a thinker." Kevin adds that Randy's confidence is comforting and makes him feel safe and loved, though it also drives him crazy from time to time!

As time went on, the bond strengthened between Randy and Kevin. Shortly after Minnesota's proposed amendment to ban same-sex marriage was defeated, they began to discuss their future. Randy's son, Barrett, preemptively called "dibs" on being the best man, and their other children expressed their hopes of seeing their fathers wed.

Conversations around marriage came up every so often over the next few months, but the couple finally seriously entertained the idea during Memorial Day weekend in 2013, when Kevin officiated his niece's wedding on Marco Island. While enjoying drinks by the ocean, Kevin and Randy agreed that they should get married, and their engagement started just as naturally as their relationship began.

While preparing for their nuptials, Randy and Kevin participated in marriage education sessions required by their church, beginning with individual surveys about their personal hopes and expectations of their partner. Kevin "quickly realized the survey wasn't really geared toward old people, and certainly not gay folks," but the couple discovered their different thinking processes when answering a question about wanting to have children. In an effort to be inclusive of their existing children, Kevin's response was that he hoped to "have four children, and have them immediately, and no more children please!" However, Randy responded that he wanted "no children and could wait a long time for children." When they shared their answers after the session, the couple laughed as they learned more about each other's humor and thought processes.

As the couple began to plan their wedding, their talent for entertaining

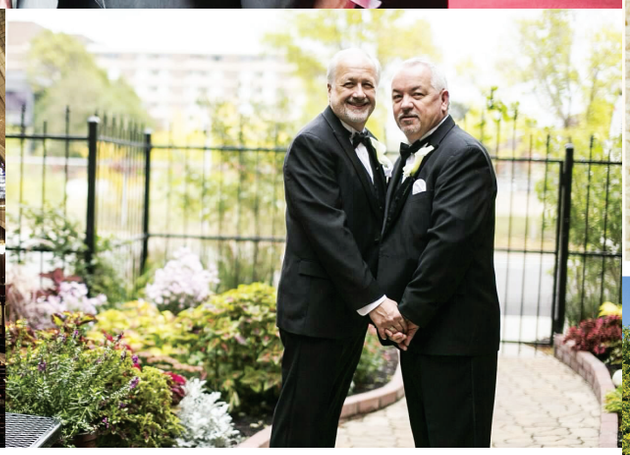
CONTINUED ON PAGE 136


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guests made the process much smoother. Kevin adds, "Who knew there were so many details to plan? The gift we had, the ace in the hole, was that Randy LOVES details and planning and choice…it was months of agony for me and bliss for Randy!"

But on Friday, October 3, 2014, all the stress of planning melted away as the couple and their wedding party (comprised of their children and two nieces) processed into the cathedral-like sanctuary at Central Lutheran Church in downtown Minneapolis. Kevin recalls, "I forgot about all the stress of planning, the thoughts of details that may have been overlooked, or of family members who may not approve of our marriage. I just saw the man that I loved, and the children that I adored, and I was ready to become 'GSquaredWed' as was our new hashtag for Instagram."

After a touching and personal sermon given by the couple's dear friend, Pastor Laurie Natwick, the couple exchanged personally written vows in front of 140 joyous family members and friends. Kevin expresses how important it was for them to "share our faith in front of our most treasured assets, our family and friends that support us every day." Once they officially became "GSquaredWed," they took a limo to Aria to celebrate with their guests.

One of Randy's favorite moments was walking into the enchanting atmosphere of Aria. From flowing drapery and glowing and twinkling lights to ornate floral arrangements, Randy felt the whole experience was "very special because we had spent so much time and energy planning, and the results totally exceeded our expectations. We could not have been happier!"

The newlyweds and their guests sipped cocktails and nibbled on appetizers while listening to live piano music before enjoying a spectacular buffet from Deco Catering. Randy's son, Barrett, gave an excellent toast filled with humor and love, and Randy recalls that there wasn't a dry eye in the place. After dinner, guests danced to the sounds of the Jason Weismann Jazz Quartet, and many guests commented that this wedding was the happiest wedding they'd ever been to.

Unlike many newlyweds, Kevin and Randy don't have to plan to build a family together — they're already surrounded by their children and loved ones. But they still get to plan their future, and they're excited by the endless possibilities. While Randy still has several more years to work, Kevin intends to retire soon and will possibly pursue his dream of opening a café or another gift and antique shop. Randy also looks forward to the traveling opportunities they will have once they aren't restricted by 9 to 5 jobs. And no matter what the next chapters of their lives will hold, they will face the joys of life together, comforted by the support of a loving partner and a dear friend.

WEDDING DATE: October 3, 2014
CEREMONY VENUE: Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis
RECEPTION VENUE: Aria, Minneapolis
CATERER: Deco Catering
FLORIST: Jennifer Frisbie Link, Bellagala
PHOTOGRAPHER: Ashley Berg Berry, Bellagala

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BY DOT BELSTLER



SAME DIFFERENCE

I had the opportunity to preview *Same Difference*, a powerful documentary film that explores the difference between oppressive and supportive school climates for gay teens. It features the stories of Justin Aaberg in the Anoka-Hennepin School District and Graeme Taylor in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

We all remember the tragic "suicide contagion" in Anoka-Hennepin in 2009-2011 when nine students died from suicide after being bullied for being gay or perceived to be gay. Justin Aaberg was one of these young people; he was 15 when he died in 2010. Justin was a very talented cello player with a loving family and tons of friends, but he was also targeted by bullies at school for being openly gay.

We have the chance to meet young Justin and Graeme through home movies, photos, and interviews with friends and family. They are both extraordinary individuals. The film includes footage of school board meetings and news reports of the issues in each boy's hometown, as well as information about Anoka-Hennepin's "no promo homo" and "neutrality" policies regarding GLBT issues, students, and teachers.

The film continues with information on the Department of Justice's lawsuit against the Anoka-Hennepin school district, which resulted in a consent decree and ongoing monitoring of district policies and actions. Watching this film and reliving those meetings and news reports underscored the fact that there has not been progress in Anoka-Hennepin, just a new spin on the truth. Today, the district claims it is working toward a safe environment for all students. In fact, I recently received a copy of the district's newsletter which boasted that the "District's unique anti-bullying work makes it a national model" (*Focus*, Spring 2015, Anoka-Hennepin Schools). The board's actions defy their words, however; the School Board recently rejected a proposal from its own anti-bullying task force that would "recognize the value of diverse people and families, including the LGBT community."*

Graeme's story, on the other hand, is one of a supportive school environment. In 2010, at age 14, he spoke to his local school board in defense of a teacher who was disciplined for supporting an openly gay student. His story went viral, he was interviewed by several news organizations, and he appeared on *Ellen*. Graeme became a de-facto spokesperson for GLBT kids and school climate. He went on to graduate from high school and is now a college student. It makes me wonder what Justin would be doing now if he went to school in an affirming district.

Twin Cities Pride is proud to help promote this film and we invite you to join us on June 20 for either the 12:30 or 3:30 screening at Phoenix Theatre. Ticket information can be found on www.phoenixtheatermpls.org. Conversations with film participants follow each screening.

To see the trailer, visit www.samedifferencefilm.com.
#TogetherWeCan End Youth Bullying
**Full text of Recommendation 3: "Honor and celebrate the contributions of diverse people and families in our community, country and world, including the LGBT community. Recognize, affirm and assess specific LGBT activities.... Continue to support student-led Gay Straight Alliance clubs...Host school-related family nights for our diverse populations ... Create public displays honoring LGBT history month each October."*

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BY THOMAS EHNERT

SPIRITUALITY: UNLEASHING CREATIVITY

As part of my spiritual journey, I've been working through *The Artists' Way*. It consists of weekly chapters and daily writing, meant to help artists recover their creativity and rediscover their passion. A phrase recently caught my attention. Julia Cameron writes, "We often resist what we most need." This led me to think about the years of resisting my feelings of attraction for my own gender. It also made me think, however, of all the creativity that I, at a very early age, resisted, fought, and suppressed along with my sexual orientation.

Let me explain. I remember going through my "*Little House* phase." This was back in the days when *Little House on the Prairie* was rerunning every morning. We read the books in school as well. I remember reading about Laura and Mary sewing. I wanted to sew too. I used my mom's scrap material to sew pillows. My dad even used my pillows for taking his many naps! I wanted to learn how to cross-stitch, knit, and crochet, too. But then I realized some were looking askance at a little boy who liked to sew. I stopped sewing.

I also loved to cook. I remember when we learned the sanitized version of the first Thanksgiving in school. At home, I dressed up like a Pilgrim and pretended I was making Thanksgiving dinner in our basement. My dad came downstairs one day and saw me running around serving my stuffed animals dinner — in his dead mother's dress! He didn't yell at me or call me names. He just grinned and went upstairs. Eventually, I started cooking and baking real food for real people. My dad loved my cookies and meals. I remember a lunch where the rice wasn't cooked all the way through though; we all sat there crunching our uncooked rice. But my dad complimented me. One time, a relative said, "You'll make someone a great housewife someday!" I thought about that statement. I stopped cooking.

In grade school I learned how to read music. I taught myself to play piano. The organists at my home parish gave me free lessons. I played for church and sang in the choir. My dad drove me to practice every day and picked me up again. My parents proudly came to whatever I played for or sang for. Then I started college, and the students called the organists "music fags". I stopped playing music and dropped out of choir.

What I've realized is that all these years, I have been resisting what I most needed. And the reason I resisted pursuing those creative outlets is that people were linking those creative outlets to my sexual orientation, which I was also resisting. What seemed to them to be "effeminate" or "girls' stuff" was therefore a threat to me, because I was trying to hide my being gay.

So I've made a resolution. This month we celebrate Father's Day and Pride. I think my dad knew he had a gay son (even though I didn't come out until after he died). Dads know these things. So in his honor, I'm nurturing the creativity he nurtured. What I resisted, I will do. What he was proud of, I will be proud of. I am unleashing my creativity, long squashed by my own self-repression. I'm going to cook. I'm going to sew. I'm going to sing. I'm going to make music. I'm going to be me.

The most spiritually healthy thing we can do is just be ourselves, do the things that may not make us a dime, but that make us who we really are. The real me doesn't care about gender roles. It doesn't care about heteronormative attitudes. My inner creativity couldn't care less about stereotypes. My inner artist cares about me! Yours does, too! I am going to embrace my inner creativity, because it is my real self. Imagine what the world would be like if all the GLBT artists, painters, musicians, clergy, hairstylists, bakers, cooks, grillers, actors, directors, singers, dancers, decorators, designers, gardeners, seamstresses, florists, landscapers, photographers, writers, speakers, advocates, doctors, nurses, lawyers, politicians, teachers, and poets stopped practicing our many and varied arts! Now imagine what the world be would be like if you added yours, or devoted more time to yours! Or just imagine what your *life* would be like if you added your art!

This Pride month, identify what creative outlets you've been resisting. Stop fighting them. Embrace them. Let's unleash our creativity and be proud of it! Our creativity as GLBT people is part of what makes us so wonderfully unique. It's a huge part of what we should be most proud of.

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BY SHANE LUECK



Co-founders Beth Mejia and Creg Schumann. Photo by Jayne Schaecher

GET INVOLVED: GAY FOR GOOD

Time and time again the Twin Cities are touted as an involved community. Volunteer rates here are among the best in the nation, and the GLBT community is no different. Nationally, the organization Gay for Good aims to energize and mobilize the GLBT community to interact with the greater community by volunteering time to various social welfare and environmental service projects. Each month, local chapters select an organization to support in their local community.

For the Twin Cities, Gay for Good came about when co-founder Beth Mejia was speaking to a friend from Los Angeles who she had worked with on various boards. In this discussion, Mejia mentioned that she was wanting to get back to charitable work in the community and he told her about the national organization, Gay for Good, based in L.A. Mejia researched the organization, and even travelled to L.A. to take part in a service project with that chapter restoring an inner city school.

"I knew this is what I wanted to bring back to the Twin Cities," Mejia says. "Knowing I wanted to to co-chair this organization here in the Twin Cities, I reached out to Creg Schumann, whom I had co-chaired previously with for the HRC gala dinner. I felt there was no better partner with whom to launch Gay for Good Twin Cities than Creg, and with that we created a strong board of advocates and community leaders to help launch [the local chapter]."

The Twin Cities chapter is only a few months old. Their first project was partnering with the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board cleaning up inner city parks for Earth Day. In May, Mejia's organization worked with Open Arms of Minnesota to cook and deliver meals to people living with cancer,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 146



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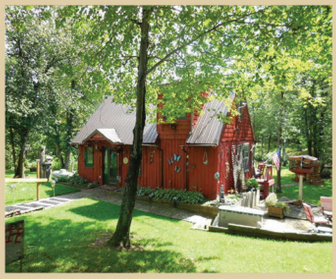




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Photos by Jayne Schaecher

"VOLUNTEERS SHOULD CONTINUE TO DONATE THEIR TIME TO GAY FOR GOOD TWIN CITIES BECAUSE IT ALLOWS THEM TO GIVE BACK TO THE GREATER COMMUNITY."

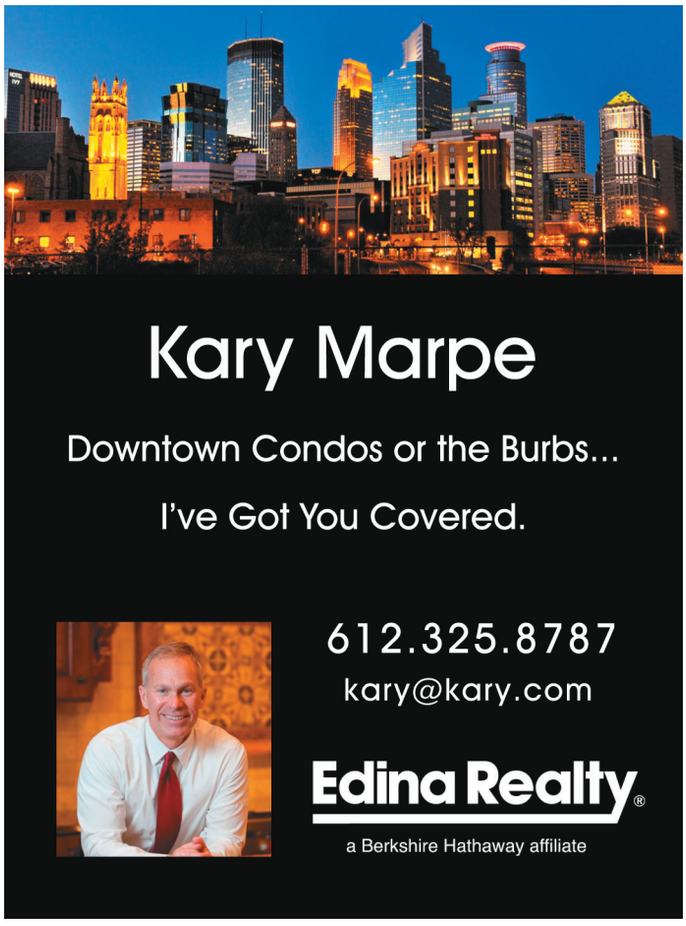
HIV/AIDS, MS, and ALS in the Twin Cities.

The coming months are already planned and joining Gay for Good only requires your time. June will see volunteers partnering with Second Harvest Heartland packaging food for the food bank; July holds a partnership with United Way Arise Project and YouthLink in assisting homeless youth; and August is the Rainbow Build with Habitat for Humanity where volunteers will build a home for a GLBT family.

"Volunteers should continue to donate their time to Gay for Good Twin Cities because it allows them to give back to the greater community," Mejia says. "It allows them social connections and a way to network in the community while doing good for various social and environmental organizations. There a lot of great organizations, doing a lot of great work and our purpose with Gay for Good TC is a simple message. 'Be Good and Do Good' is our motto, just by donating your time."

For more information go to www.gayforgood.org or Facebook "Gay for Good Twin Cities".





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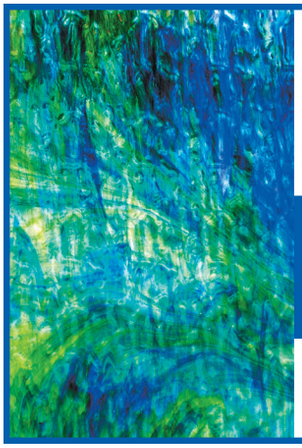
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OUR SPORTS

BY NELL GELHAUS



PLAYING FOR THE OTHER TEAM:

BRITTNEY GRINER AND OUR UGLY TRUTH

Sorry to rain on your Pride parade, but there's something we need to talk about. In April, WNBA superstar Brittney Griner of the Phoenix Mercury and her fiancée Glory Johnson, also a WNBA player for the Tulsa Shock, were both arrested following a domestic dispute at their Arizona home.

This news came as a shock to fans of the couple who followed their love story both on and off the court. Griner and Johnson both have substantial followings on Instagram and were also recently featured on TLC's *Say Yes to the Dress!*. Griner specifically has been an outspoken GLBT advocate since being selected first overall in the 2013 WNBA draft, even penning a memoir, *In My Skin*, on her painful experiences as a closeted athlete. Together, Griner and Johnson's high profile as a couple was a much-needed image boost for a league that is only beginning to acknowledge its gay players and fans.

In a statement to the police that April afternoon, Griner stated that the fight was caused by the stress of planning their wedding and buying their first home. Through her lawyer, the couple apologized, saying, "Glory and Brittney sincerely apologize for the distraction this has caused their families, respective teams, the WNBA, sponsors, and fans." Griner since has pled guilty to disorderly conduct charges, which will be dropped once she completes 26 weeks of domestic violence counseling. Johnson's case is awaiting a pre-trial conference. The WNBA handed down a swift seven-game suspension.

According to a 2014 survey by the National Violence against Women Pre-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 152

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THERE'S A MISCONCEPTION TO OUTSIDERS LOOKING AT GAY RELATIONSHIPS THAT BOTH PARTIES IN THE RELATIONSHIP ARE EQUAL. THEREFORE ANY VIOLENCE BECOMES TRIVIALIZED.

vention Research Center, 21.5 percent of men and 35.4 percent of women living with same-sex partners have experienced intimate-partner violence in their lifetimes, numbers that are significantly higher than opposite-sex relationships. And this, my friends, is why we need to talk.

For all the Ray Rices and all the Floyd Mayweathers, gay men and women in intimate-partner relationships harm one another even more often. The stats are unbelievable and perhaps surprising, but they are our ugly truth. With marriage equality and the GLBT rights movement sweeping the nation, the unpleasant narrative of abuse in same-sex relationships is hidden, buried in scholarly journal articles. There lies the danger. How can we fix a problem we won't acknowledge? How can we help each other if we continue to look away? And why *do* we look away?

Most people's understanding of the model of intimate-partner violence looks something like: the abuser abuses the victim. The powerful abuses the weak. The man abuses the woman. There's a misconception to outsiders looking at gay relationships that both parties in the relationship are equal. Therefore any violence becomes trivialized. To many people, two men fighting is just two men fighting, not an abuser and a victim. Women in domestic violence situations are marginalized in the same manner. Griner and Johnson were just in a "catfight"; they just had "some drama". The fact that the injuries they sustained were scratches and bite marks does nothing to help clear up the seriousness of the encounter. And regardless of their Instagram photo (and wedding photo) since the incident depicting them jokingly biting at each other, it was indeed serious.

Sometimes, too, people encountering relationship violence don't themselves understand that what they are experiencing is actually domestic violence. The Power and Control Wheel diagram is a common tool used by domestic violence experts, developed by the Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, which outlines methods of abuse. It's necessary to note these methods here, both as a reminder for ourselves and to observe where same-sex domestic violence differs from the heterosexual population according to an adaptation of the wheel by Roe and Jagodinsky. Tactics include:

- **Intimidation**, where one partner makes the other afraid with looks, actions, and gestures. Smashing objects, abusing pets, displaying weapons.
- There's **emotional abuse**, where one partner belittles the other, through name-calling, *questioning their sexuality*, playing mind games, accusing them of being mentally unstable, humiliating them and putting them down.
- When one partner controls what the other does, and who they speak to, it's considered **isolation**. They may use jealousy to control the other, and demand to know their whereabouts, or cut them off from their family, friends, or *the gay community*.
- **Minimizing** is a tactic used when one partner makes light of the abuse, saying it didn't happen or that the other partner caused it. The partner might accuse the victim of mutual abuse, blame alcohol or drugs as being responsible for their behavior, or *blame being gay*.
- **Using children** is also a scheme in domestic abuse situations. One partner keeps the other from seeing the children, or uses the child to relay messages. They make the other feel guilty about the children, or even abuse them. *They might also out the victim to ex-spouses.*
- When one treats the other as a servant within the household and makes all the big decisions, it's considered to be **using privilege**. They act as the "king of the castle", and define the roles or status in the relationship.
- **Economic abuse** is lesser known. One prevents the other from getting or keeping a job, making them ask for money. They interfere with work or education, and put assets in their name only. Or contrastingly, they make the other partner support them, possibly making them steal or commit fraud.
- And then, of course, there is outright **physical abuse, coercion, or making threats** to harm people or destroy things. They threaten to leave or commit suicide. They stalk or hound the other. *And again, they could threaten to out the other to friends, family, or colleagues.*

There are many reasons why those in abusive relationships choose to hide the mistreatment from family and friends. There's shame and denial, of course, but GLBT victims also speak of additional hurdles. One survivor reported to me that she had spent so much time and energy trying to win approval from her family and friends for her same-sex partner, that when she found herself in a domestic violence situation she was afraid to use her support network because she feared it would cause them to blame her sexuality. As her circumstances worsened, she sought out anonymous help, again to no avail. "When I called a shelter for help, the volunteers kept using incorrect pronouns. [They'd ask] 'Are you safe from *him*?' which made me feel like they wouldn't take my abuse situation seriously because it was from a same-sex partner."

Those who are in abusive partnerships who are not yet out of the closet have yet another reason to hide and further anxiety. Undeniably, it makes sense that those of us in same-sex relationships would fear rejection from the heterosexual population. The success of our marriage equality movement is due in large part to the fact that we've normalized our lives: we go to work, we walk our dogs, we pay our bills, and we watch Netflix. We're just like you. We worry that if we show any negativity, any fault, we'll lose our momentum and support. But these qualms and uncertainties should not (and do not) prevail over the needs of those in our community who live in fear from their intimate partners. We must share these stories. We must not look away. We must support one another, first, and not be ashamed. The strength of our community is built upon the strength we provide each other.

If you feel unsafe in your relationship and need help, contact OutFront Minnesota to speak to a trained domestic violence counselor, by dialing 1 from OutFront's InfoLine at 612-822-0127 or 800-800-0350. Monday through Friday, advocacy services are offered at the Hennepin County Domestic Abuse Service Center located in the lower level of the Hennepin County Government Center. OutFront Minnesota also maintains a Same-Sex Domestic Abuse Hotline at 612-824-8434.



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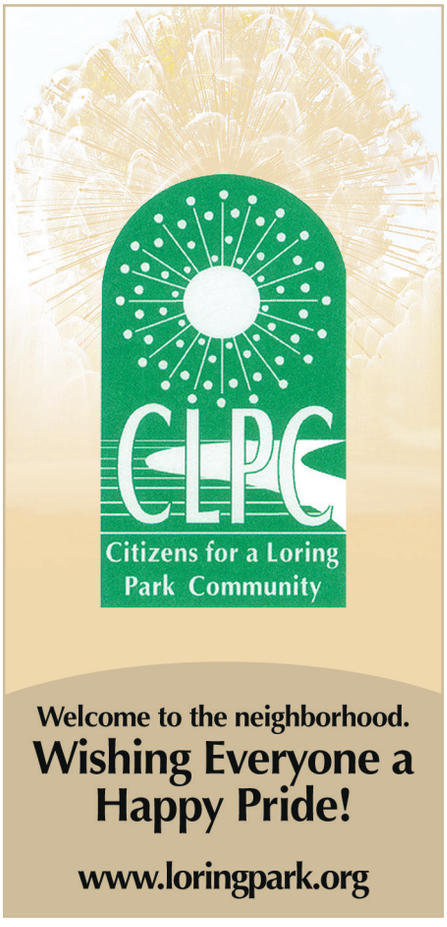
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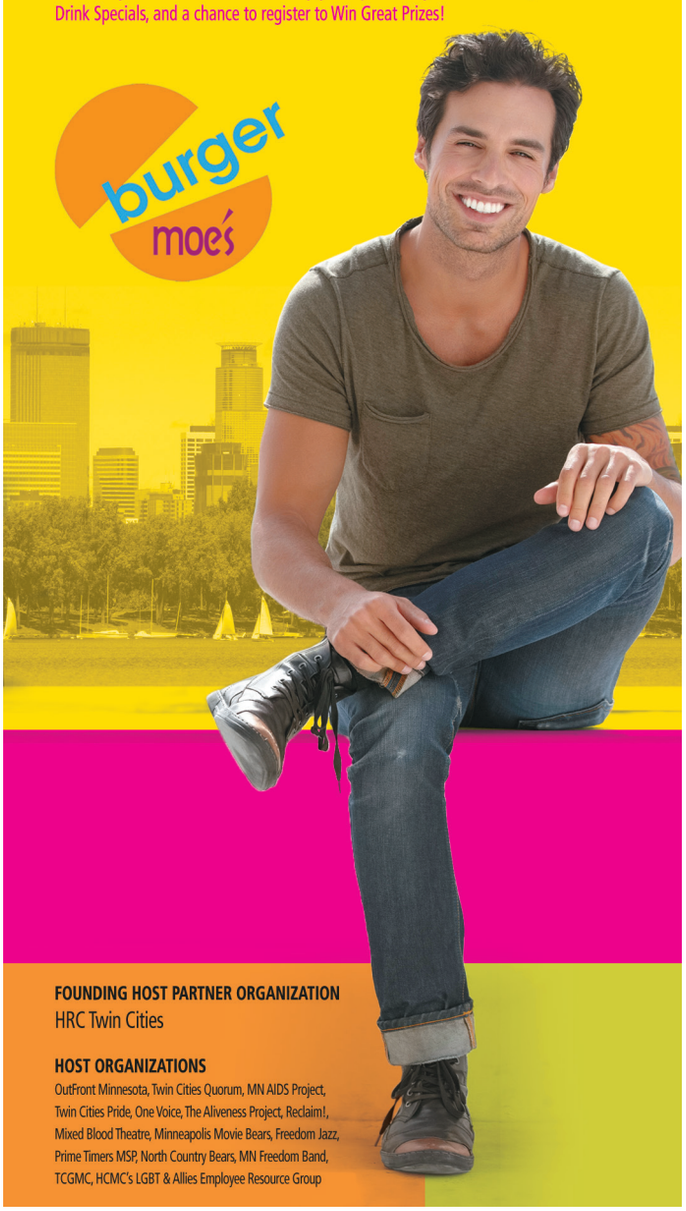
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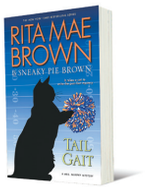


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PRIDE 2015

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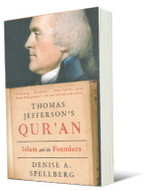
TAIL GAIT: A MRS. MURPHY MYSTERY
Rita Mae Brown & Sneaky Pie Brown
Bantam
$26

In this 23rd Mrs. Murphy Mystery, the denizens of Crozet, Virginia, are shocked and grieving after the murder of the elderly and beloved Greg "Ginger" McConnell, shot down in cold blood on the golf course. Who would want to kill a professor emeritus of history? And why? As the reader ponders, his attention is drawn back into 1777, and to the fates of a young American soldier, his British prisoner Charles West, and a native businessman and landholder Ewing Garth. As the threads weave together across old and new Virginia, we hear William Faulkner's whisper: "The past isn't dead. It isn't even past." Brown is a top-notch mystery writer, and, as she and her animal partners often do, she mixes in some education with murder.



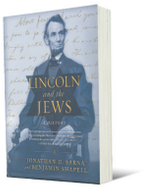
THE IRISH GARDEN
Jane Powers / Photographs by Jonathan Hession
Frances Lincoln Limited
$60

All garden books are beautiful, but *The Irish Gardens* is exceptional; stylish even, moving in its text and myriad brilliant images. Powers shows the spectacular range of Ireland's plants that, thanks to the Gulf Stream, nurtures alpines through colder, rugged terrain and tree ferns and bananas in "softer" regions. Roaming through more than 40 gardens, showcasing ancient estates and modern follies, photographer Hession, Powers' husband, masterfully evokes moods and mists of the Emerald Isle. The haunting cover strikes the reader, drawing one in to the nearly four hundred pages of spectacular vegetation. Hession often waits for the lowering clouds, mist cover, or particular time of day to clothe his subject in a rich, subdued palette; a pleasing change from bright blue skies and noonday sun.



THOMAS JEFFERSON'S QUR'AN: ISLAM AND THE FOUNDERS
Denise A. Spellberg
Vintage
$16.95

Denise A. Spellberg details how a number of America's founding fathers, specifically Thomas Jefferson, considered the place that Muslims — theoretical Muslims in effect, considering they knew of none personally — and their religion were to play in the building of democracy. Against those who wished to see America as an exclusively Protestant Christian country, Jefferson and others drew on John Locke and other Enlightenment thinkers to create a society that would include all citizens (well, not African Americans or women) whether or not they agreed with their beliefs. Catholics, Jews, Muslims, and atheists were to have a part in the mix. Spellberg starts with a history of anti-Musilm (and Catholic) fervor and moves on to show the power that 18th century thinking still holds for today.



LINCOLN AND THE JEWS: A HISTORY
Jonathan D. Sarna and Benjamin Shapell
Thomas Dunne Books/St Martin's Press
$40

Unlike many Americans, Abraham Lincoln knew Jews; friends, supporters, acquaintances, and appointees, of which one was the first Jewish chaplain to the Union Army's 4,000 Jewish soldiers. Lincoln rescinded Ulysses S. Grant's General Orders No. 11 that all Jews be prohibited from his territory, and the day he issued the Emancipation Proclamation he took time to write a testimonial to his podiatrist, Issachar Zacharie. Only to his valued confidante, Abe Jonas, did he write, "You are one of my most valued friends." At Lincoln's birth, in 1809, there were roughly 3,000 Jewish citizens; at his death, 150,000. Presented chronologically, the text reveals Lincoln's developing concerns for these citizens, the incremental effect eerily heightened by color photographs of his yellowed letters, manuscripts, and other historically relevant material.

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Kudos to Linda Raines for compiling the top 5 daily stories!









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BY SHANE LUECK



Quorum Board of Directors. Photo by DM Photographs

CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION: 20 YEARS OF QUORUM

Twenty years is a long time; no one can dispute that. So imagine the elation Quorum members must feel at celebrating 20 years this year. As a leader in the equality movement, Quorum, the Twin Cities GLBTA Chamber of Commerce, champions the case for a fully inclusive business community as a conduit for economic development.

"We believe that including all people is inherently good for business," says Rebecca Waggoner, Quorum's interim executive director. "We provide leadership, guidance, and resources to embody our guiding principles of connecting, building, and strengthening our business community at every level. One of our primary objectives continues to be to create a climate of growth and success in our community."

Through Quorum's partnership with the National Gay and Lesbian Chamber of Commerce (NGLCC), one area of their work includes assist-

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"WE STRIVE TO CREATE VISIBILITY AND BUSINESS ACTIVITY FOR ALL OF OUR MEMBER BUSINESSES AND ORGANIZATIONS," WAGGONER SAYS. "QUORUM SUPPORTS GLBTA BUSINESS OWNERSHIP IN THE TWIN CITIES TO BE MORE ACCESSIBLE AND REWARDING, AND WE SUCCESSFULLY WORK ALONGSIDE BUSINESSES AS THEY WELCOME, CONNECT, AND ENGAGE THE TALENT AND GROWTH THEY NEED TO THRIVE."

ing and developing Certified GLBT-owned enterprises and supporting their entrance into the supply chains of forward-thinking equality-minded companies through fully inclusive Supplier Diversity programs. Through NGLCC, Quorum became part of a much larger movement for GLBT equality in the business space and has a large support system available across the country to advance the GLBT business owner.

"We strive to create visibility and business activity for all of our member businesses and organizations," Waggoner says. "Quorum supports GLBTA business ownership in the Twin Cities to be more accessible and rewarding, and we successfully work alongside businesses as they welcome, connect, and engage the talent and growth they need to thrive."

Quorum works with businesses of all sizes and business owners of all experience levels; and through a variety of individualized and group services, the organization helps members identify new opportunities to grow and connects them with peers who are excited to advise and support along the way. Members receive a full range of services including programs and events, monthly networking events, marketing opportunities, and member services, such as referrals and education. Member businesses represent all types of businesses across all industry sectors, including financial services, energy, insurance, manufacturing, wholesale and retail trade, health care, real estate, and communications.

Twenty years ago, Quorum was the vision of three GLBT community leaders (Scott Mayer, Lee Roehl, and Lois Carlson) who wanted more than just a monthly business meeting. Twenty years ago, Quorum had five members and a dream to create an organization what would serve as a hub for GLBTA business leaders. Today, Quorum is that organization.

Over the past twenty years, Waggoner says they've experienced a surprising amount of change. She has seen numbers of Certified Business Enterprises grow from one in 2008 to 20 in 2015 with more GLBT-owned businesses getting certified every month. In 2006, Quorum took over the reins of the National Coming Out Day Luncheon that now hosts over 450 guests every October. In 2007, the organization had its first Community Leadership Awards honoring local business and nonprofit leaders and that tradition continues today. In 2009, Quorum received its first national award (the NGLCC Chamber of the Year) and the organization hasn't stopped growing. According to Waggoner, Quorum's membership grew in excess of 20 percent so far in 2015 and is attracting new members monthly.

With all of that in the past, what lies ahead for Quorum's future? As Sam McClure, past executive director, so eloquently put it, "Let's talk about what decades mean. That first decade of any organization is creation, development, excitement, and survival. Ten years means that a foundation has been built. Another decade means finding a way to shift from surviving to thriving and to becoming a force that can actually create change. What the next decade brings is limited only by imagination."

What does the next decade mean? The goal is to increase the impact of an equitable business climate for Quorum's stakeholders who include local GLBT business owners and employees, corporate partners, nonprofits, and the broader overall movement for GLBT equality.

"Nothing is more powerful for business and our community than people — the perspectives they share, the conversations they spark, and the actions they take," Waggoner says. "While our members are doing what is best for their customers, co-workers, and community, we're at their side to help them grow and succeed."

To celebrate Quorum's 20th anniversary, be sure to save the date for a gala to be held in December (Quorum's anniversary is December 8). More information will become available as planning progresses.

Anyone interested in joining Quorum can visit the website at www.twincities-quorum.com or send any questions to Rebecca at rebecca@twincitiesquorum.com.



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TAKING AND LEAVING: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS WITH KEVIN SESSUMS

Kevin Sessums' *Mississippi Sissy* (see *Lavender*, Issue 340) was bookended by death: his parents, gone by the time he was eight, and the murder of dear friend and mentor, journalist Frank Haines, when he was 18. Between that time and the opening of *I Left It on the Mountain*, on the hung-over morning of his 53rd birthday, Sessums had acted, written for Andy Warhol's *Interview,* and been a celebrity interviewer for *Vanity Fair*. He had also become addicted to sex and drugs, and, in this memoir, began asking hard questions of himself. The mountain of the title is Kilimanjaro, whose summit Sessums attained; the depths, numerous and nameless, he plumbed from with-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 168

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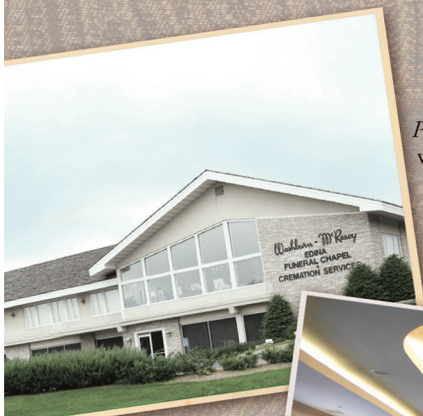


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"I NOW PRAY FOR ONE MAIN THING. AND THAT IS TO REACT THE EXACT SAME WAY NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS TO ME IN LIFE, WHETHER THAT SOMETHING IS WONDERFUL OR THAT SOMETHING IS REALLY BAD."

in. Sessums recently answered some questions from *Lavender* concerning this segment of his life's journey.

In the 2008 *Lavender* interview about *Mississippi Sissy*, you said, "I can carry on a conversation with anybody. After spending time with Eudora Welty when I was a teenager, interviewing Madonna is a piece of cake." Here in *Mountain*, you write, "But questions back then were what I put to others, not to myself." How is it now to answer to yourself?

Kevin Sessums: I know my own tricks — from both perspectives, both the one questioning and the one answering. So I guess I look on this more as confessing, or even surrendering, to my own narrative.

Like Sarah Monday, heroine of Joyce Carey's *Herself Surprised*, you encounter the prodigalities of your life, whether drugs, sex, or spirituality, with a certain fresh astonishment. Do you approach life differently, now?

KS: I do approach life differently; how could one not if one is sober, a recovering addict? I now pray for one main thing. And that is to react the exact same way no matter what happens to me in life, whether that something is wonderful or that something is really bad. I pray to react with grace and humility no matter what comes my way.

You underwent major physical rigors in your quest for forgiveness, the Kilimanjaro climb, the 500-plus-mile walk across Spain's Camino de Santiago de Compostelo, yet slipped after each of these successes. How did these experiences aid you?

KS: They proved I could be determined. I was resilient. I had fortitude. I just had to look on my getting sober in the same way and stay the course. But there is a difference. The climb up Mt. Kilimanjaro and the pilgrimage across Spain had a destination I could reach as proof I had accomplished the task I had set out for myself. Sobriety is a daily reprieve. One never reaches one's destination. One begins anew each day. Well, I do. I can only speak for myself. I wake up. Head to the shower. Say a prayer and the thing I do after soaping up the crack in my ass is surrender to God's will. I guess there is that: I did learn to surrender to the journey on those adventures you mention.

On the mountain, you heard your parents' voices; on the Camino, in the sacristy of an ancient, deserted church, a bloody "Christ-on-the-Cross" opened his eyes, moved, looked at you; images of a giggling Lord Ganesha made numerous appearances, even back in New York; and Lucifer himself appeared, first in your world, then summoned you to his. How have readers reacted to these "woo-woo" revelations? How have such manifestations continued forward — if they have — into your life today?

KS: Ganesha just giggled at this question. Did you hear him?

Things went from bad to worse before you dealt with your meth addiction. You even had to give up and foster out your adored dogs, Archie and Teddy. Was that a deciding moment in your final reaching for sobriety?

KS: Yes. People have different kinds of bottoms. Mine came when I realized I could no longer care for my dogs, which in many ways were all I had left in the world. They grounded me. Loved me unconditionally. Even, in their way, forgave me for my behavior in front of them when I was an active addict. Thank god dogs can't write their own memoirs, since Archie and Teddy could write a scandalous one. When I finally broke down and started to sob as I drove away and left them there to be cared for by these kindhearted strangers who had volunteered to foster them, the friend with whom I drove there reached out and put her hand on my sobbing shoulder. "This is what surrender feels like," she said. I've been sober ever since because it was my first real moment of surrender. The presence of my dogs saved me in many ways when I was struggling so I see the poetic symmetry of their absence being the thing that rescued me, as painful as it was.

The three of you are back together again, and you're currently editor in chief of *FourTwoNine* and dot429.com. Is life on an even keel again and holding? What do you see/hope for the future? Do you approach the celebrity life differently now?

KS: The book made the *Celebrity New York Times Bestseller* list in April. I always thought of myself as celebrity-adjacent. I still do. Is life ever on an even keel? Life is still life, its keel is as ever uneven. I just can keep my balance better now. I am not only grateful for that but am aware of being grateful.

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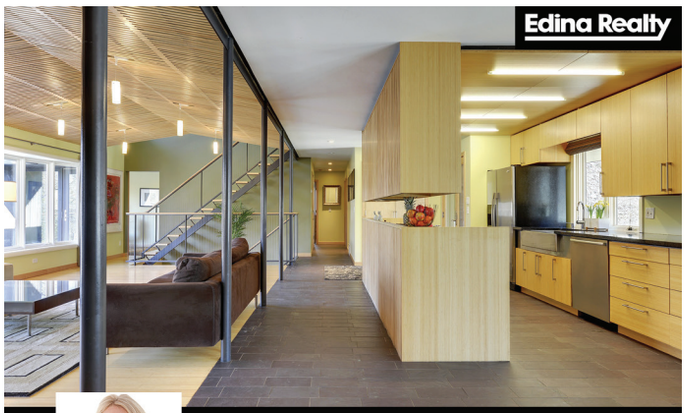


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BY SHANE LUECK



Guard Boston Joe is getting some cigar time in the Library at Betty Danger's Country Club with Sister Jenna I'Talia, Sister Mia DuBois and Sister Girtha Rotunda.
Photo by Hubert Bonnet

IN THE HABIT: SISTERS GIVING BACK TO THE COMMUNITY

"The first time I went out in public manifested as Girtha Rotunda a young lady came up to me and said, 'You look marvelous. How long did it take you to get ready?' Without thinking I blurted out, '5 years my dear.'"

That was a number of years ago, and Girtha Rotunda has been making the rounds ever since. Everyone has a different story of how they get involved with The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence. Rotunda's involvement with the local Mission House (The Ladies of the Lakes) began a number of years ago when she was still living in Las Vegas.

"One evening after my show I went to a little gay bar not far from my home," Girtha says. "I was sitting at the bar when all of a sudden, in a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 172



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Sister Jenna l'Talia, Sister Girtha Rotunda, Sister Mia DuBois, Sister Hilda Clyme, and Guard Boston Joe getting in some time on the mini-links at Betty Danger's Country Club. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

cloud of glitter, the doors flew open and in walk three giant acid trip clown nuns. As I recall correctly, my jaw dropped as I uttered 'What the f*ck?' They were beautiful, weird, glamorous, creepy and downright fascinating."

From that moment, Girtha was hooked. She approached them, introduced herself, and left the bar without even finishing her drink. "I went home and promptly Googled The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence," she says. "The following weeks before I fell asleep, I would read, watch, and research the deep, rich "Sistory" of the organization dating back to 1979."

At that time, Girtha was in the middle of opening up a new production show on the strip at Planet Hollywood. Work consumed her life. "Three years later and after eleven-and-a-half years of living in Las Vegas, I decided to move to Minnesota to be closer to my family to be an uncle….or aunt….. pick one," she says.

At that time, a Minnesota chapter of The Sisters was in the wee beginning stages of being formed. "Yet again, work consumed my life as I was about to depart on a world tour," Girtha says. "I made time to meet with them and express my interest in joining this growing chapter before I took off. When I returned to Minneapolis the metaphoric phone rang, and I picked up. It was time to answer my calling. Finally, 5 years later from the first time I met The Sisters in Las Vegas to when I made my first manifestation, Girtha was born. It has become a part-time job devouring my free time from my 9-to-5 gig. It's not for everyone that's for sure. But I would not have it any other way."

As for her work with the Ladies of the Lakes, Mission House of The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, Girtha says she and the other Novice Sisters (including Christmas Morningwood, Jenna l'Talia, Gloria Master-Bates, and Mia DuBois) are real 21st century nuns and take their vows seriously to serve their community as a registered nonprofit organization. The nuns raise cash-money and give it away again to those in need of it. Their mission statement sums it up best: "The Sisters have devoted ourselves to community service, ministry, and outreach to those on the edges. To promoting human rights, respect for diversity, and spiritual enlightenment. We believe all people have a right to express their unique joy and beauty. We use humor and irreverent wit to expose the forces of bigotry, complacency and guilt that chain the human spirit."

The Sisters are an international organization and everyone is welcome to join: gay, straight, male, female, purple, or polka-dot. Each abbey, convent, or nunnery of The Sisters Of Perpetual Indulgence across the planet has a house name. For example: The Derby City Sisters are from Louisville, Kentucky. The Sin Sity Sisters are from Las Vegas. The Ladies of The Lakes are from the "Land of Ten Thousand Lakes".

As their mission statement reads, the Ladies of the Lakes use humor as an avenue of progress. According to Girtha, it's because there is truth in humor. "Who doesn't like to laugh?!" she says. "Well, my elementary school librarian, Mrs. Savage, never did. But then again, who knows? Perhaps after a few glasses of vino behind the closed doors of the teachers lounge she did. Humor and laughter break down walls and open up avenues for open and honest communication. Laughter brings us closer together. It is a common ground that we all share. Like pooping."

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Going guerilla with Guard Boston Joe, Sister Mia DuBois, Sister Hilda Clyme, Sister Jenna I'Talia, and Sister Girtha Rotunda. Photo by Hubert Bonnet

The Ladies of the Lakes have spent their humor and time volunteering and raising money for organizations such as Avenues for Homeless Youth, Dining Out For Life, Minnesota Aids Project, Out and Sober Minnesota, The Pride Institute, and the St. Paul School District's Queer Prom to name a few.

The Sisters work with so many different organizations, that Girtha says it would be unfair to choose one over another. "If I had to choose I would have to say the cause or organization nearest and dearest to our heart is the human race," she says. "Yes, we may not always agree with our neighbor. Yes, everyone has their own unique story. Yes, life is not fair or easy. And yes, socks should never be worn with sandals or a black blouse with a brown skirt. But in the end, at the very end when it is all said and done, we are stuck on this spinning rock together in the middle of the Milky Way. We should and need to take care of one another and treat each other fairly. In some little way our existence as beautiful beings should leave this place slightly better from when we were first introduced to it."

Now, let's say you are a registered nonprofit organization and you need a few extra hundred bucks for a new photo copier, The Sisters would be more than happy to help you raise that money by holding a bake sale in your honor. Or perhaps you're having a gala and you need coat check attendants. Have no fear, the nuns are queer.

It all depends. Sometimes Girtha and her fellow nuns (Hilda Clyme, Marcia Dymes, Sheba Grand, Lesba Tyrian, and Boston Joe round out the ranks of The Ladies of the Lakes) go out specifically to raise money for a particular organization. Other times they just go out and have fun for the sake of having fun. And on those nights all the money that gets donated to them goes into a general fund for future projects. If you ever have a few extra coins in your pocket, no matter where you are in the world, when you see a bunch of nuns with white faces and fabulous shoes, go up to them and slip those coins into their purses knowing that your pocket change will go to your queer community and beyond.

The Ladies of the Lakes have participated in the Ashley Rukes GLBT Pride Parade for a couple years now. Aside from gaining exposure for the work that they do, Girtha says it's simple: "Because every little drag nun dreams of the day when she can…elbow, elbow, wrist, wrist. Clutch the pearls and blow a kiss."

Just recently, in May, Girtha spoke at RuPaul's DragCon. ("It was amazeballs! Yes. I said amazeballs. You're welcome, Perez Hilton. Although, to my knowledge, a lot of them were tucked. Zing!") Girtha was part of an hour-long round table discussion about her organization, its history, fundraising, and fun-raising. She personally covered the topic of the Holy Fool and Spiritual Clown that has deep roots in Native American spiritual practices and her favorite temple to worship in: the theater.

As for the future of Girtha, The Ladies of the Lakes, and The Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, well that would be a very long list. For a shorter list, visit them on Facebook ("Ladies of the Lakes"), online at www.TheLadiesOfTheLakes.org or their parent organization at www.TheSisters.org.

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BY RANDY STERN

RIDE REVIEW: 2015 FORD F-150



Photos by Randy Stern

Here is a sobering fact: At one time Ford sold about a million of these trucks in one year.

In the automotive business, selling a million units of one particular model is not only a major feat, it is absolutely unheard of. There is no reference as to what that actually looks like. This is a number equal to last year's sales of Mercedes-Benz, BMW, and Lexus combined. It seems impossible, but in a good economy, it can be done.

For 37 years, Ford's F-Series pickups lived on the top of the automotive sales charts in the U.S. Today, Ford can only sell in the hundreds of thousands — hundreds upon hundreds of thousands, in fact. Most of these sales go to business customers, both big and small, as well as to the public sector. Retail customers love them, too. It is no surprise that you see a lot of Ford trucks virtually everywhere you go.

Sales are only half the story. Among pickups, Ford maintains a loyal customer base. They have a wide majority of repeat buyers, going from generation to generation, sometimes skipping a generation. They also have a high propensity toward ownership longevity. Ford owners have no qualms racking up hundreds of thousands of miles on their F-Series.

As being the biggest selling vehicle in America, Ford decided to take the biggest risk in its history. Normally, a pickup truck is all steel, from high-strength rolled-form steel in the frame to sturdy cabs and beds. However, the new 2015 F-150 pickup was made with high-strength, military-grade aluminum; the first vehicle of its kind to be built this way. To clarify, Ford used aluminum for the bed and cab, not the frame.

It certainly caused a stir. While we were being assured of weight savings from aluminum components (Ford quotes a 700-pound savings over the last generation F-150) it had to take a lot of convincing that this truck still has the cache that put it out front for the past 37 years.

I had to be convinced. Yes, even your auto reviewer, who happens to like trucks, needed some reassurance that Ford made the right move by going with aluminum on their most popular vehicle.

To prove it, Ford delivered a 145-inch wheelbase version of the F-150 with the luxurious Lariat trim, a four-door SuperCrew cab and a short five-and-a-half foot bed. All it needed was a middle-aged chubby bear to drive it to find out whether it is all worth the paradigm change in pickup truck engineering.

By changing the cab and bed construction to aluminum, Ford decided to give the F-150 a completely new look. Gone are the days of the angular cab. Instead, there is a blunter front end with an "industrial" 45 degree angle shape seen in various places. Each grade has a different grille finish and texture. It would either be a three horizontal bar setup or a simple set of horizontal lines, as in the XLT. This Lariat tester shows off a chrome three-bar design with horizontal inserts. This is augmented by a complicated, but effective, headlamp arrangement with a semi-block splitting the upper and lower lenses. The Lariat features a body-colored bumper and fog lamps to finish up the nose.

Heading rearward, the familiar glasshouse from the previous generation F-150 was carried over, with a bit of a rear cant towards the end. Having the front lower "dip" helps in greater outward vision at the A-pillars. The bed design is a bit more three-dimensional now, with some folds to make it more stylish and provide continuity with the cab. The tailgate has a bit of a spoiler effect at the top and another fold/line never seen on any Ford pickup before, in the same 45 degree angle theme. In all, the F-150's look yielded mixed reviews from many observers, yet one cannot argue that is a huge advance in full-sized/half-ton pickup design.

The most compelling part of this Lariat tester is the two-tone paint job. Remember back in the day when you could get a two-tone on your pickup and it would be any location on the side you wanted? You could make it a tri-tone with the main color on top and below with the secondary color right down the middle of the side along the belt and rocker line. Today's two-tones usually ride the lower belt line and through the bumpers, especially stretched over this SuperCrew/five-and-a-half foot box configuration with Guard (a deep green) on top accented with Caribou (a tan/taupe shade) on the bottom. The paint combination alone is very outdoorsy and perfect for those who traverse deep into the woods.

While you are going deep into the forest, hopefully you are enjoying the view from inside the huge SuperCrew. Just when I thought I'd seen some big rear seat spaces, the new SuperCrew offers a huge space. The seats are pretty comfortable and there's leg room that would embarrass a Hyundai Equus or Kia K900.

It is up front where the F-150 has improved. Material quality is up on the instrument panel and there are some compelling shapes to make it distinctive, including plenty of 45 degree angles found on the exterior. The cowl may seem a bit low, but it is positioned for even tall drivers to manage the 8-inch touch screen for MyFord Touch/SYNC. The biggest improvement is in the instrument cluster, anchored by an 8-inch Productivity Screen showing many functions of the F-150, including trip and fuel consumption information. You could also monitor trailer settings, see the health of the engine and other readouts using a multi-function set of buttons on the steering wheel. All buttons are familiar to those driving the latest Ford (and Lincoln) products, which are very good to the touch and operation.

Front seats are plenty huge. They are comfortable and offer support with some bolstering available. The leather on the Lariat feels tough, but complaint for comfort. On the Lariat, there is an option for the middle front seat to be upright for a sixth person on board or lowered for a huge armrest with cup holders, a phone insert, and a small storage place. If you choose the six-seat configuration, you can open up the cushion for another storage

CONTINUED ON PAGE 178



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place where the cup holders can be attached to the edge of the cushion.

As much as some people are eagerly awaiting the arrival of SYNC3, you can tell there have been some marked improvements with the MyFord Touch/SYNC system. Bluetooth pairing and phone connection were quick. The navigation, climate, and audio functions are familiar and quite good. Sony provides 12 speakers of great sound throughout the cabin.

To celebrate the fact that the 2015 F-150 went to an aluminum cab and bed and shed hundreds of pounds in the process, it was time for a new EcoBoost engine. This time, it is a 2.7-liter twin-turbocharged V6 with 325 horsepower and 375 pound-feet of torque. In this Lariat model, the EcoBoost was attached to a six-speed automatic transmission with a Tow Haul mode and the four-wheel drive system.

Helping to make things more efficient for the EcoBoost 2.7 engine is the Auto Start-Stop feature, enabling the ignition to cut out at intersection stops. It just seems that today's stop-start systems are less obtrusive than before. I can still hear it work, and just feel very slightly.

With this configuration (the SuperCrew with the five-and-a-half foot bed) the towing capacity is 8,200 pounds with a payload of 2,160 pounds.

One thing the F-150 has been known for is having one of the smoothest rides in the full-sized pickup business. That part is true: the F-150 offers a smooth, well-balanced ride. Like most pickups, rougher roads reveal some fight with the suspension system. The F-150 works hard to absorb the worst conditions. Even the best suspension systems try their best to manage roads that are simply falling apart. Handling is soft, but balanced through the curves. Lean and roll is minimal, thanks to an improved front suspension setup.

Pickup trucks are burdened by a big steering wheel and a large turning radius. Though true in the F-150, thanks to a 145-inch wheelbase, the action and effort from the wheel is very good while reaction and response is on-point. On-center feel is excellent with no looseness at the wheel. Brakes are good, with nice pedal reaction. Though long in distance, normal and panic stops are solid and linear.

The thing about turbocharged engines is when you have a vehicle with one or two on board, you expect to fill the tank with a premium-grade fuel. Not in the Ford F-150. You use regular fuel instead. That helps on the pocketbook, especially when this Lariat SuperCrew 4×4 turned an average fuel economy figure of 18.4MPG. This Lariat model came with the "small" tank, just 23 gallons. Though it may mean less fuel to pump for the money, it also means more fuel trips for those who like to drive long distances.

The F-150 lineup starts with a base price of $25,800. For that money, you get a base XL trim in a regular cab with a 3.5-liter V6, an automatic transmission, and a few standard amenities. To get the Lariat tester here, with a payload upgrade, a towing package, two-tone paint, and the 2.7-liter EcoBoost V6, the sticker price came out to $51,765. However, if I went with the most popular and available trim — the XLT — and equip it similarly to the Lariat tester, I would save $4,500. The leather seating would be omitted, since it is not available on the XLT.

An aluminum cab and bed, a rolled-form steel frame, a small twin-turbocharged V6, and a lot of gumption: that is how I would summarize the 2015 Ford F-150. Having driven almost every truck sold in this country, this provided the biggest surprises of them all. It is actually a good pickup truck.

It should not surprise you that the F-150 is a good truck. But, the perception of being a top-selling product is that somehow quality gets shoved to the side when trying to push every unit out the door. On the contrary! What Ford is doing with the new 2015 F-150 is simply paying attention to the importance this truck is having on the marketplace. To be a good example of how new technology, different construction materials, and methodologies can be integrated on one of the most popular vehicles on the road today while maintaining the volumes necessary to retain its leadership.

The Ford F-150 is better than before, making it simply a good truck. Better still, it's a good truck for a summer in the city…and beyond!







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BY RANDY STERN





Photos by Randy Stern

HOW TO DEAL WITH SERVICING AND MAINTAINING YOUR CAR

When something goes wrong in your vehicle, what do you do? If you are mechanically inclined, you fix the problem right at home — or, do the light maintenance that you can do. However, our inclination is to take it to the shop. It could be the dealer's service bay or an independent garage that's right in your neighborhood, or specializes in the brand of your vehicle.

Most likely, dealing with maintenance and repairs can come with challenges. These challenges include time, money, or the severity of the issue. There are other challenges, as well. Some shops might not want to service us because of the car we drive, or the fact that we're GLBT, or some sort of discriminatory reason. Luckily, we have places that will service our vehicle, be an advocate for its health and our sanity.

In search of finding one to help understand the complicated mess of automotive service and maintenance, I had a chance to talk to Tim Suggs, Owner of Turbo Tim's Anything Automotive in Northeast Minneapolis to find a way to ease all of our pains at the service bay.

For the record, Suggs's shop works on all makes and models. "Anything Automotive truly means we will work on *anything* automotive," said Suggs. "We do everything from oil changes to transmissions, head gaskets to brakes, you name it we do it. We have the most recent scan and diagnostic tools offering a much cheaper alternative to bringing your car to the dealership. Our techs are highly skilled and experienced so we can handle just about any job that comes through the door."

This is great, but I had to probe more from Suggs.

What are the most common complaints customers have with their vehicles?

Tim Suggs: The most common concern we hear from customers is that their car is making a funny noise. It's important to get those noises checked out because we often see that those noises are coming from the brakes, muffler, engine, or suspension. The safety concerns we have with those noises

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vary but it's best to find out where that noise is coming from. Our simple diagnostic fee is $20, well worth the peace of mind.

What are the biggest misconceptions about car maintenance and repairs?

TS: The biggest misconception we hear about car repair is that mechanics are not trustworthy. We want to debunk that myth! We want folks to feel comfortable with the work we are doing on their cars so we do our very best to explain what repairs are necessary vs. those that are suggested, going so far as to show our customers where on the vehicle the repair is needed. We are in the business of helping people and we want folks to walk away feeling comfortable with the work that they've paid for, back to enjoying their cars again.

How do you ensure a customer that their vehicle is being serviced with the greatest of care?

TS: We have a welcoming atmosphere and treat all of our customers and their cars with respect. We also try to treat each vehicle how we would treat our own, keeping them clean by using floor mats and offering car washes and details as a service as we are able.

What are your best suggestions on making sure a vehicle is properly maintained?

TS: We see too many transmissions fail because of simple neglect. You want to make sure you flush your fluid before it gets dirty, not when it is dirty! When it's dirty is too late. We suggest flushing or doing a drain and fill every 30,000 miles and replacing the filter (if your vehicle has one) every 90,000 miles. It's the cheapest insurance you can do to keep your transmission working in good order.

Any other tips you want to pass along to our readership in hopes of making them more comfortable with the process of car care?

TS: Find someone you trust and feel comfortable with to work on your car. Ask around to see who your friends, family, and community are going to, check out the reviews, and get price quotes to make sure you're receiving quality repair at a reasonable price from folks that respect you, your budget, and your decisions. Don't be shy, ask questions and learn a few things when you come into the shop. It will make you feel more empowered and in the know about what's happening with your car. Finally, enjoy driving! Remember the freedom and privilege you have to drive a car so have fun and be safe!

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OUR HOMES

BY LISA ANTENUCCI



Bobby Jardin & Kevin Miller. Photo by Annie Blankenship Gerber

GROWING SUSTAINABLY

A Minneapolis Couple Plans for a Growing Family with a Sustainable Home Renovation

Kevin Miller and Bobby Jardin are feeling hopeful. They are preparing for a Skype interview with a birth mother in Florida who showed interest in their adoption profile. Though the outcome of the interview is by no means certain, it is a vital sign that the outlook looks good for the married couple hoping to adopt. They have been in the adoption process for four years, during which they have undertaken an extraordinary home renovation and built a life together here in Minneapolis. But since enlisting an adoption consultant three months ago, they have expanded their reach significantly, qualifying for agencies that are licensed in many states beyond Minnesota. Their prospects have increased, too: they get a call about every fortnight

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Photo by Bobby Jardin

from an interested party.

The adoption process may have begun four years ago, but Kevin and Bobby have been planning for it for much longer than that. They met in Chicago in the early 2000s, Kevin, a civil engineer, and Bobby, a medical device specialist recently out of the Air Force and Navy. When Bobby lost his job, Kevin suggested that they move back to his home state of Minnesota. "Typical Minnesota-boy behavior," says Bobby with a laugh. "Move away… move back home."

After renting for a few years, the couple wanted to settle down as homeowners. Originally they wanted to buy a loft, but at the time loft options in Minneapolis were limited to new condos going up in the warehouse district. "We thought, why increase the demand for new construction when we can find something that exists and fix it up?" says Kevin. They bought a Queen Anne on a double lot in the Whittier neighborhood and settled in.

Whittier at the time was not utopian. "At first, I was not a fan," admits Bobby. "The first night there were cops in the yard."

"We called the PD over 100 times the first year," adds Kevin. They witnessed drug deals, arrests, gun shots, and prostitution on a regular basis. "When you move into a house, you learn more than the real estate agent told you," Kevin jokes.

Despite after-hours offenses, Whittier was an attractive neighborhood for the prospective parents because it had good schools and diverse residents. Since Kevin and Bobby did not know the race of their future child, they selected a multiracial neighborhood — Somalian, Hispanic, and Hmong — that had an IB World School and the Waldorf Magnet School. Whittier was also close to Uptown and the lakes, both with easy access via Midtown Greenway, and close enough to downtown Minneapolis that they could ditch one of their cars. "We expected that one of us would have a job downtown, so we can take public transit," Kevin explains.

The house needed to be fixed up significantly. The previous homeowner had removed most of the flooring on the main level, exposing the subfloor such that the basement was visible between the cracks. Tiles were missing and the plaster and batten walls were damaged. There were even "skulls and Wiccan symbols all over the place in the basement," notes Bobby.

"My mother came over with holy water and blessed the house!" jokes Kevin.

Kevin and Bobby started the renovation in 2008. The first phase aimed to make the house livable by updating the interiors throughout. "We have always been sustainably minded, Bobby and I," says Kevin. An unwavering commitment to sustainable design guided the renovation. For starters, Kevin became LEED-accredited. At the time, LEED had not published residential guidelines for existing homes, so he took the training for new buildings. They wanted to get LEED credit for as much of what they touched as possible. Doors came from the Re-Use Center (now defunct), knobs and hardware from Northwest Architectural Salvage and Guilded Salvage Antiques, tiles from a recycled goods shop, lights from Bauer Brothers Salvage, and reclaimed timbers from local tear-downs. They replaced bathroom components with low-usage faucets and fixtures. They wished to use only lum-



Photo by Bobby Jardin

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ber certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) as being sustainably or locally harvested, which in one case meant sourcing trim from a mill in Green Bay, WI. Though now common, FSC-certified lumber was at the time new and hard to source. All the paints and stains were certified as containing low or no amounts of VOCs.

One of the bedrooms had original floorboards, which Kevin and Bobby wanted to match throughout the house. Though one-inch hard maple plank flooring is difficult to come by, they decided to stick with it for two reasons. The first reason was ecological. Kevin likes to point out that reusing existing materials is more sustainable than generating new materials. The second reason was historical. Queen Anne houses like Kevin and Bobby's were the living quarters of blue collar workers in the 1880s, while the nearby Victorian houses were upper-class homes. The one-inch planks that floored Queen Anne houses were the cut-off scraps of the wide planks that floored Victorian houses. The flooring was a social differential.

"I liked that story," says Kevin, "so I said 'let's keep it.'" Finding FSC-certified one-inch hard maple planks to match the existing floorboards presented its own challenge. Kevin ultimately hired Aacer Hardwood Flooring in Green Bay to custom mill it.

The homeowners' attention to the flooring typifies their persistence in finding sustainable solutions. They scoured the Twin Cities and beyond for whatever materials would work. "We were on a budget!" laughs Bobby. "We thought 'we want to do something sustainable; let's find the materials that are out there and make it work.'"

One of the most in-depth parts of the first phase was the implementation of a residential greywater system, which Kevin designed and certified himself. "I was in a unique position to stamp my own design," admits Kevin.

The City of Minneapolis acknowledged that the state plumbing code did not allow for greywater systems but the city (and the state) can approve the systems on a case-by-case basis. The city approved the system after performing an "equivalency review," comparing the international plumbing code to the state code. "At the time, the city's plan examiner said he used our plan as practice review for the Twins stadium that now also has a greywater and recycled rainwater system," explains Kevin. Since issuing a permit to Kevin, the city has referred several homeowners interested in installing a greywater system to Kevin's design. In 2008, it was only the second permitted residential greywater system in Minneapolis.

One of the primary goals of phase one was to prepare a nursery, what Kevin and Bobby call "the baby's room". "Since we wanted to start a family, we knew that one of the bedrooms had to be set up as a nursery right away — an obvious choice was the second bedroom next to the master bedroom — and we wanted it done before signing up with our adoption agency in Minneapolis. We didn't know how long we would wait to have a baby, but from doing some research it was said that a baby's room should be the first thing to have situated when considering adoption."

For the décor, Kevin and Bobby chose gender-neutral colors since they did not know if they were going to have a baby boy or girl. They painted the walls pale lavender and the trim white. The crib and baby changing station came from their friends John and Thomas, whose adopted son had outgrown them.

By the time phase one wrapped up in 2011 "we knew we were in over our heads," jokes Kevin. Consequently they enlisted Shelter Architecture to design phase two, an addition to the house and new garage that aimed to be GreenStar certified. The addition is designed as a family room that can be converted to a master suite in the future. In the short term, Kevin and Bobby wanted a gathering place for their growing family, but in the long term could see its use changing as the family changed.

The addition has a flat roof that features both a roof deck and porch. The roof hosts two solar arrays — one elevated on a pergola outfitted by Silicon Energy, a Mesabi Range company, and the other mounted directly to the roof by tenKsolar, a custom solar product company based in Bloomington. The addition has radiant heated floors and all-LED lighting with James Hardie Panel siding and Black Locust cladding. The couple earned extra GreenStar credits for using Black Locust wood, a documented invasive species in Minnesota. The concrete floors are sealed with SoyCrete and the reclaimed wood interior with TimberSoy — both soy-based stains from Kevin and Bobby's favorite DIY shop, the Natural Built Home Store. The deck railing and stairs were custom fabricated by Discount Steel, while NE Sheet Metal fabricated the exterior light fixtures, planters, and gutters. "We employed local labor as much as possible," notes Kevin.

Though Shelter designed the expansion, Kevin handled construction administration. His professional experience as a project manager put him in the unique position to be both homeowner and general contractor. "If you have the time, and you just start making phone calls, you can typically find what you're looking for, though it may require a bit of creativity," he says. "You eventually become an expert in the field by the end of the day just by osmosis, just by living and breathing."

Kevin may make it sound like wearing both general contractor and homeowner hats was a breeze, but in fact it was a complex operation, complicated by the fact that Kevin was out of state during the nine months prior to construction. He was working in New York City as a project specialist, helping with FEMA's infrastructure mitigation efforts after Hurricane Sandy. His team repaired parts of the existing water resources infrastructure, in an attempt to limit future damage. They improved critical components of the waste water treatment plants so the sewer system could stay functional during the next hurricane. Preparing for construction back home while he was away required careful planning.

Phase two was completed last summer and the outcome is striking. Kevin and Bobby deem it a success in every regard except one: the kitchen flooring. When the kitchen remodel was postponed to the next phase of the project, they decided to install a temporary floor covering in the interim to get by. It is a tile product by Armstrong, unique because of its high recycled and rapidly renewable material content and low-emitting adhesives. "It's a cool product to talk about and research, but it didn't quite meet our fashion needs," laughs Kevin.

"It's bio-based, though, so I'm OK with it," jokes Bobby. It was the only sustainable temporary solution on the market.

Over the course of the renovation, the Whittier neighborhood has gentrified. Homeowners of all kinds have moved in: "young urban professionals, families with kids, 'the gays'," Bobby laughs. "We and the neighbors here made a commitment to stay."

Phase three is up next, set to commence this summer. The homeowners plan to insulate the walls and attic of the original house, replace the original siding and windows, and complete the roof deck. Implementing the remainder of the master plan — including a rain garden and water feature — is in the works, too. "We want to be totally off the grid," says Kevin, so he is looking into a storm water retention system that he learned about through FEMA to irrigate the yard and pump the water feature. It is essentially a custom-shaped bladder that will fit in the crawl space under the deck and collect run-off from the roof.

"Of course, the most sustainable thing to have is a native landscape [that doesn't require irrigation] and a garden feature that doesn't need water," says Kevin. They will adhere to a "no potable water rule" so if the bladder is empty, they won't irrigate or operate the fountain. The garden feature is designed to be as attractive dry as it is while it is running. They plan to ask the City of Minneapolis to waive a portion of their storm water fee, as their site will not slough water back into the city infrastructure.

Even though phase three hasn't begun yet, the "most intrusive" parts of the renovation are done and the home is ready and waiting for an adoptee. Friends and family have passed on loads of baby supplies: a crib, baby changing station, stroller, and at least three car seats fill the basement. "Basically everything; we just need the baby!" says Bobby.

Kevin adds, "We're hopeful that 2015 is the year we at least get matched." As the saying goes, build it and they will come.

Lisa Antenucci is an award-winning dynamo at Shelter; an innovative, creative, yet accessible design studio specializing in the architecture and interior design of sustainable homes and unique commercial spaces. See her work at www.shelterarchitecture.com. Article written with Benjamin Olsen, Shelter's marketing associate.

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SKIRTING THE ISSUES: A MILLION MILES

According to Rand McNally, the distance between downtown Minneapolis and downtown Alexandria, Minnesota is 132.5 miles.

Actually, that's completely wrong. Truth be told, the distance is more like a million miles.

This point was driven home a few weeks ago when I visited Alexandria to conduct training on statewide legal resources as part of my day job. The training involved speaking to representatives of more than a dozen organizations: social service agencies, religious centers, and various nonprofits.

Understand that when I show up as a nonprofit executive director, I'm all business. For the most part, I never talk about being a transgender woman, nor do I share about my personal story.

Thus, in Alexandria, I spent two hours covering how poor people have a limited ability to connect with lawyers; in turn, I spoke about legal resources that are available via the Internet or telephone. Attendees seemed appreciative for the information. More importantly for purposes of this piece, no one in the room appeared uncomfortable or judgmental about being in the presence of someone who looks feminine but has a voice that sounds all too dude.

Which of course is good for me. And, in light of what follows, somewhat ironic.

As the meeting was wrapping up, I realized that one of the organizations present was a western Minnesota GLBT-related advocacy group. (For confidentiality reasons, I can't identify the specific group.) At that point, I departed from my standard practice and took the advocacy group person aside and related that I do a lot of speaking about transgender-related topics. I offered to come back to Alexandria to talk on what it means to be transgender, with the goal of fostering greater understanding and compassion for trans people and anyone else who's "different."

In response, I heard that such a talk in Alexandria would be "scandalous."

Huh?

For sure, when it comes to GLBT acceptance, I knew that Alexandria and greater Minnesota generally are far more conservative than the Twin Cities. As you've read here before, I refer to Minneapolis and St. Paul (and adjoining burbs) as a GLBT "oasis". We take it for granted when we see two daddies or two mommies pushing a stroller down the sidewalk while holding hands. Likewise, here in the Twin Cities, being transgender doesn't automatically exclude one from consideration in being hired as the executive director of a small nonprofit.

What I didn't understand was how much different places like Alexandria are from our little oasis.

As the GLBT advocacy person related, it's extremely difficult for a person to come out as gay or lesbian in Alexandria. In fact, the local high school has a policy of not permitting speakers on GLBT topics.

What's worse is that discrimination against GLBT folks and persons of color is pretty rampant. Thus I heard about a man being refused a job because he's both gay and black. Similarly, I learned of a transwoman of color who's regularly harassed. There were other stories about marginalization of people who aren't part of the straight, white majority of this small town.

Hearing this made me want to return to Alexandria as Ellie Krug, the transgender activist, all the more. The first step in any kind of constructive change is to talk about the problem. Of course, it'd be way better for someone local to do that talking; however, it's equally clear that GLBT people outside the Twin Cities are afraid to advocate for greater acceptance of themselves or on behalf of others; it's just not going to happen.

Hence why it's often necessary for an outsider to show up.

The GLBT discrimination, marginalization, and fear that I heard about in Alexandria aren't restricted to that area. In the last couple of years, I've talked to people from across greater Minnesota and heard similar stories. (I'm originally from Iowa and it too has this issue.)

Moreover, I'm not alone in wanting to tackle the "outstate problem"; the wonderful folks at OutFront Minnesota are going statewide in their advocacy for GLBT persons, particularly with respect to safe schools and transgender inclusivity.

Additionally, just last year, the Minnesota Lavender Bar Association (the state's largest group of GLBT lawyers) announced creation of an annual $5000 fellowship to any lawyer practicing in greater Minnesota who's out as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender, with the goal of giving GLBT persons legal resources while also normalizing that it's okay to live as your true self. (Note: the MLBA is now accepting outstate lawyer applications for the 2015 Fellowship.)

With June being Pride Month — making it certain that Loring Park will be filled with people from many parts of the state — I urge you, dear Gentle Readers, to reach out to those from greater Minnesota. Reinforce that living authentically yes, has its price, but also its rewards. Similarly, remind your outstate straight friends and family of the need to have compassion for others.

Finally, I'll put it out there: invite me to your greater Minnesota hometown to speak on that very topic: compassion and kindness for those who are "different".

I promise to show up.

Ellie Krug is the author of Getting to Ellen: A Memoir About Love, Honesty and Gender Change. *She welcomes your comments at ellenkrugwriter@gmail.com*

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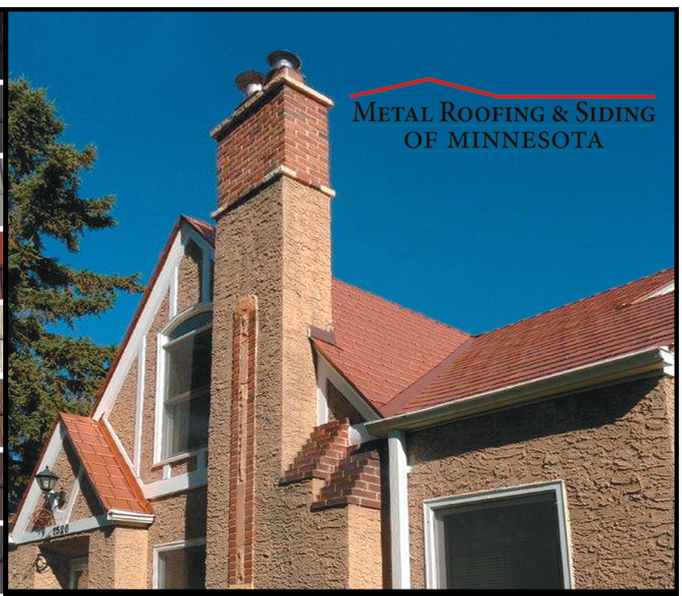
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BY JENNIFER PARELLO

DATELAND: ON NOT READING PROUST

If a little dreaming is dangerous, the cure for it is not to dream less but to dream more, to dream all the time. – Marcel Proust

I always imagined myself as the type of person who would have read Proust by the time I turned 50.

I was reflecting on this recently while drinking a beer and watching *The Real Housewives of New York*. At the time I was wearing pajama bottoms, a torn t-shirt marred by food stains, and a mismatched pair of slippers. I happened to catch my reflection in the darkened window next to the TV. Disturbingly, I was not disturbed.

"So, this is how I turned out," I said, lifting my beer in a salute to my reflection.

I turned 50 a few months ago without having read Proust. My younger self, who had quite lofty aspirations for me, would be mighty disappointed with my lack of follow-through on this and so many other dreams.

But you know what I have to say to my younger self: *You can go straight to hell, you judgmental monster. You and your big ideas! You set me up to fail.*

When did I have time in the past five decades to read Proust's masterpiece, the 1.3-million-word *In Search of Lost Time*? I've been far too busy storming through life, setting fire to relationships, and pampering my pets. I'm lucky if I can steal a moment to read the back of a cereal box.

My 20s were confusing. My 30s were too much fun. I paid penance for my 30s with my 40s, which were just the worst. I really looked forward to turning 50. The traumas of my 40s had mostly been sorted out by my 50th birthday, and I saw nothing but blue skies on the horizon.

"I'll have time to read and think," I promised myself. "I'll play chess and start a literary salon. I'll stop using words like frickin' and speak in complete sentences. I'll no longer dread being dragged to the opera. I will be smart and sophisticated, and I will stop stumbling through life like a drunken toddler."

Well, I'm a few months into 50 and not much has changed. My love life is once again in flux. I still can't properly cook vegetables. And I spend far too much time dissecting the lowbrow antics of the *Real Housewives*, and far too little time discussing literature.

And, yet, I'm OK with it. Because there was something the younger me didn't figure into her ambitious plans. Once you stop struggling against the tide of life, you just kind of float. And it becomes easier. You discover the pure joy of accepting who you are — food-stains, dim-witted amusements, and all.

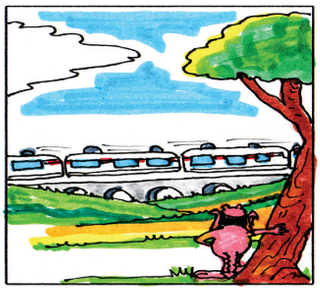
Yet, old habits die hard. I can't stop dreaming of a better me. I continue to set outrageous goals. For example, I'm learning to make donuts next weekend! I'm doing this for no other reason than it seems like a skill that will impress my friends. But, if I prove to be a failure at donut making, no worries! There's a gourmet donut shop nearby and I can always pass them off as my own. My friends won't care. They'll just be glad I showed up with donuts.

And I haven't given up on Proust. After the latest episode of *Real Housewives* ended, I logged onto Amazon and bought all seven volumes of *In Search of Lost Time*. Of course, purchasing the books isn't the same as reading them. Still, I was pleased by my small effort, and happily returned to my louche lifestyle.

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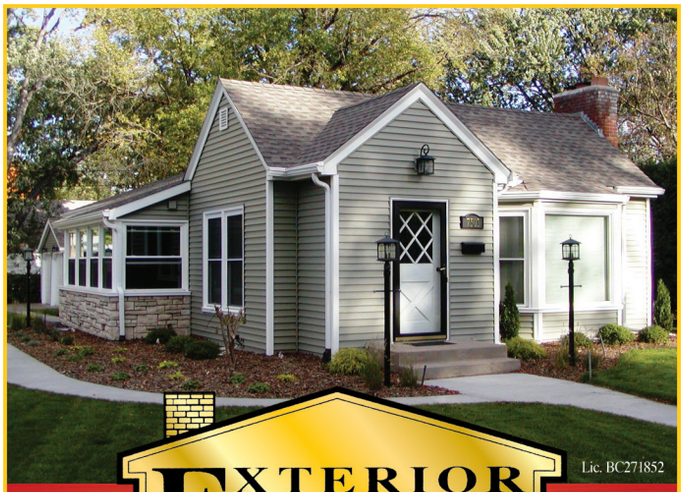
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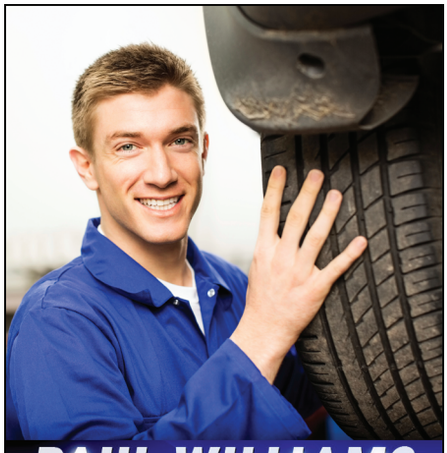
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BY JUSTIN JONES

Through These Eyes
DADDY ISSUES

Midsummer's night, 2004. I'm 18. This will be my last year in Fort Lauderdale.

I'm with friends at the home of a man we know only as Mr. Gene. It's "one" of his homes, so he says, and it's colossal: three stories tall, garage space to house a small fleet of sports cars, a Roman-inspired swimming pool, and a dock on the Intercostal for a yacht he keeps in Miami.

I don't know much about Mr. Gene, except that he likes to keep attractive young men in his company. He pays for extravagant meals, occasionally takes us on trips to South Beach, and provides cash for washing his cars, cleaning his house, and mowing his lawn. He's never asked to sleep with any of us, and if he's said it once, he's said it a thousand times: "I don't want any of you for sex. I see you as my sons."

But there are rules.

It's just after one in the morning. I'm sitting by Mr. Gene's pool with my friend Jacob, drinking wine spritzers; I've been teasing Jacob about his relationship with a boy whom I bedded ages ago (read: weeks). Muffled techno music plays from inside the house, where Mr. Gene is throwing a party.

As Jacob and I stand to make our way inside to join the others, he retaliates for my poking fun by shoving his fingers through my hair to mess it up. He darts off, sending me into a counter offense and initiating a strangely erotic game of tackle-tag. We chase each other around Mr. Gene's pool, over the dock, through the vegetable garden, across the Slip'N Slide, by the grill, through the veranda, for fifteen minutes or more, until we're out of breath and too exhausted.

"Okay, okay," I fall to the grass on my knees and then on my back. "I give up. Truce."

Jacob stops by the pool, wipes his forehead with his wrist and leans his hands on his knees, panting heavily. "My hair's messed up now anyway, bitch."

"We need to go inside."

"We look like shit."

"Yeah, you do." I say. "I'll fix your hair." He nods and I approach.

As I'm playing with Jacob's hair, he raises his hand to pick a blade of grass off my cheek, then grabs my arm and sends me flying into the pool. I resurface quickly, ready to renew our horseplay, but I stop short of making any crude remarks when Jacob comes into focus. I see Mr. Gene standing behind him, looking at me. The color leaves Jacob's face when he sees my expression. Neither of us has ever gotten into trouble with Mr. Gene, and we both know how strict he is about running around the pool.

"Go inside and wash up, Jacob," Mr. Gene says. His voice is baritone and carries with it an accent worthy of a New York Mafioso. "I'm going to talk to Justin about why we don't run around the pool. You take a shower and go home."

The instruction knots my stomach. *Why does he want* ME *to stay?* Jacob abandons any attempt at saving me and runs off without giving me a second look.

I breathe heavily as I swim toward the pool ladder. I'm nervous. I realize I've never been alone with Mr. Gene before.

He walks to the edge of the pool and squats down beside the ladder. "No, no," he says. "This way." He sticks his hand out over the water and motions for me to grab it. When I do, he lifts me out of the pool with his arm. The show of strength intimidates me. He intends to frighten me, and he does.

I look down at my feet when I'm standing up, ashamed and afraid. What will he say to me? What will he *do* to me?

"You're always so polite, Justin," he says. "I'm really disappointed in you."

"I'm sorry, Mr. Gene." I want to cry. My heart's racing, anticipating a fist or a hand to crash down on my face.

"Look at me," he says. I do.

He studies my face, almost adoringly, and brushes my bangs out of my eyes.

He continues, "If one of you fell and hurt yourself, or got hurt anywhere in this house, you know what kind of shit-trouble you'd be in, kid? What shit *I* would have to answer to? What would your family think if they knew you were out here? What would they say when they found out you were with a middle-aged man in the middle of the night who let you drink in his house?"

I look down again. He grabs my mouth and forcefully jerks my face back up.

"Justin, you need to listen to me. Do as you're told and you won't get hurt."

His words are chilling — the way he speaks, it doesn't sound like he's talking about getting hurt running around the pool. He's insinuating something sinister.

"Go change your clothes and join the party," he says angrily. He pushes my face away, turns his back, and leaves me frozen in fear.

I never saw Mr. Gene after that exchange, but I wanted to. I'd found in him, as I'd find in many others, the authority I'd seen only dangerous slivers of as a kid.

ThroughTheseEyes.JustinJones@gmail.com